

SOLIHULL PARISH NEWS



TEAM CHURCHES

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



St Alphege (Sundays)

8.00 a.m. Said Communion
 10.30 a.m. Sung Eucharist except:
 1st Sunday 5th November
 5.00 p.m. New Door Commemoration Service
 2nd Sunday 12th November
 9.15 a.m. All Age Eucharist
 10.45 a.m. Civic Service - Remembrance
 5.00 p.m. Sung Eucharist
 1st Sunday 3rd December
 5.00 p.m. Advent Carol Service
 Thursdays 10.30 a.m. Said Eucharist

The Junction

9.15 a.m. Junction in person at the OBH on 5th, 19th November and 3rd December
 9.15 a.m. Junction on Zoom on Sunday 26th November

St Helen

Third Sunday 10 a.m. Morning Prayer

St Michael at Sharmans Cross School on Sundays

10.30 a.m. Eucharist.

St. Michael's Chapel, Bryanston Road on Wednesdays

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

Friday

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

Full details on the homepage of the 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.

WEDDING AND BAPTISM ENQUIRIES

Please contact the Parish Office:

life.events@solihullparish.org.uk

0121 705 5350

The Revd. Simon Marshall
The Revd. Sue Chandler

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THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Visit our Website

www.solihullparish.org.uk

Want to email the Editor?
parishnews@solihullparish.org.uk

Cover picture

"Remembrance"

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Editorial

We are now in the season of remembrance, the season of recalling and recollecting, of pausing and reflecting, in which the focus is on looking back and remembering those who have walked their journey of life before us, and are now beyond this world.

This period is often known within the Anglican Church as the Kingdom Season - a season when Christian people celebrate their belonging to one another, both the living and departed, joined to each other in Christ through our baptism.

This is the time of year when we become particularly aware that those who are Christ's, whether or not they have passed through death, are joined in prayer that God's kingdom will be revealed finally and in all its fullness.

This solemn season begins on Wednesday 1st with the Feast of All Saints, which celebrates those men and women in whose lives the world-wide Church has seen the grace of God powerfully at work down the ages.

The season of remembering moves on as, one day later, the Feast of All Souls is observed, with two services of thanksgiving and remembrance at St. Alphege Church. In these services we will remember before God those whom we have known personally: those who gave us life or who have nurtured us in faith.

On the second weekend of November, we will observe the national traditions of Remembrance. There will be an Act of Remembrance on Saturday 11th and Remembrance Sunday services across the parish the following day. On these occasions, we will explore the themes of memory, self-giving and loss, and also seek to confront the ongoing issues of war and peace.

On the last Sunday of November, the 26th, the annual cycle of the Church's year ends with the Feast of Christ the King. The year that began in Advent with the hope of the coming Messiah ends with the proclamation of Christ's universal sovereignty.

The cycle begins again on the first Sunday of December which is Advent Sunday. From that point, we look ahead to the coming of the one who is both child and Saviour. We shall then recall the words of the old Advent hymn 'Come, Thou long expected Jesus':

*Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.*

May this season bring us gratitude for the lives of those we have loved, and the hope of a peaceful future.

Fr Simon.

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Roundabout

Solihull Parish Puppets

We were delighted to be invited to take part in St. Helen's Harvest Songs of Praise on Sunday 1st October. As team leader, I was even more delighted when Pat Marshall, a former member of the Solihull Parish Puppets Team, said that she was thinking of re-joining us and Linda Hicks said she was happy to help out too. Our plans for performing "God will provide" a parody of Gloria Gaynor's "I will survive", came together with tweaking, polishing and great team work, and we were finally ready to perform. We had a great time, and I understand our performance was very much appreciated by those who watched it! I wonder if other people have been waking up with the phrase "God will provide" singing in their heads?

Solihull Parish Puppets would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to The Parish News for providing the funds for us to buy our very own sound system. We had thought that we would use it for the first time at the Harvest Songs of Praise, but we didn't need to in the end as we were inside for the service due to the weather. We shall definitely make use of it at The Junction, though, and it will be a huge advantage to be able to use our own sound system and head microphones for sketches.

We are now looking forward to performing at other locations within Solihull Parish as we used to do before Covid struck. We also hope and pray that others will be inspired to join our team, whether as a puppeteer, prop designer, roadie, technician, costume maker, sketch-writer or anything else involved in putting on a puppet show. Please do contact Linda Hicks l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk or me, Ruth Sabbagh, ruth_sabbagh@msn.com for more details if you are interested.

Ruth Sabbagh

Friends of Brueton and Malvern Park

Our local Councillors and community hope to develop a brand-new community group: *Friends of Brueton and Malvern Park*.

The idea of this Group would be to meet up at least once a month to take a walk as a group to identify any issues, get involved in some litter picking, be involved in future decisions about park improvements, carry out events of interest for example picnics in the park, bulb planting, nature walks, and be in a position to apply for funding to do the above and most importantly make new friends .

Anyone interested should contact:

Kerrie Grandison
Community Development Team | Housing and Communities | Economy & Infrastructure
Directorate Solihull MBC
kgrandison@solihull.gov.uk
Mobile: 07876478853

Oversight Areas – an Update

In my article about Oversight Areas in the September edition, I said that the Oversight Minister for our area (Hobs Moat, Elmdon, Olton and Solihull parishes) was yet to be decided.

We are now delighted to announce that Bishop Anne has appointed the Revd. Nick Parker to the role of Oversight Minister. We congratulate Nick on his appointment.

**Pam Price
Parish Warden**

Second Sunday Drinks and Nibbles

As the second Sunday of November is 12th November, which is Remembrance Sunday, there will not be refreshments this month after the 11 a.m. Eucharist. On 10th December, the second Sunday of the month, there will be an 11 a.m. Eucharist with refreshments afterwards. These occasions are always most enjoyable and are a lovely opportunity for fellowship, a chance to chat speak to people you might not otherwise meet.

The Parish Christmas Card

Once again we have high quality Parish Christmas cards and we encourage everyone to buy them. The cards are now available from the Bookstall in St. Alphege Church, from the Parish Office or by contacting Fran Halstead (07710 329030, fran.halstead@gmail.com). The picture this year features scenes from the Candlemas window in the North aisle, which shows the infant Jesus in the arms of his mother, and the church in the snow. The packs are £4.50 for 10 cards. We have had to raise the price for the first time due to rising costs, but they still represent good value. Please buy while stocks last and support the Bookstall which distributes its profits to selected charities.

The Bookstall also continues to sell an excellent range of cards and books for all occasions at modest prices. Please do support it.



Ringling for Rectors at St. Alphege

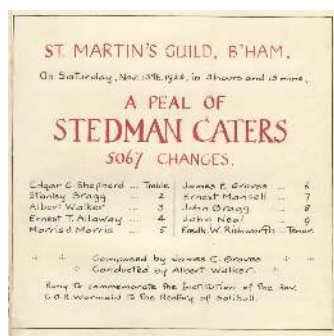
Previous articles have outlined the ringing at St. Alphege in connection with royal occasions and with the fabric of the church. Following the very recent installation of our new Rector-designate, the Revd. Nick Parker, this article outlines the ringing dedicated to various Rectors that we've carried out over the years.

The first recorded instance I can find is in 1904, when we rang a quarter peal "*with the bells half-muffled as a token of respect to the **Rev. Charles Evans**, late Rector of the parish*". As we will see later, Rectors are not forgotten when they have been replaced!

The next, in 1912, was rung "*on the occasion of the christening of Brian Harvey Goodwin, son of Rev and Mrs Wormald of All Saints, Four Oaks, Sutton Coalfield, and grandson of **Rev. T B Harvey Brooks**, Rector of Solihull*". This was not just a quarter peal (taking 40-45 minutes) but a full peal taking 3 hours 21 minutes.

The following, in 1926, also a peal, was rung "*after the institution service, conducted by the Bishop of Birmingham, of the **Rev. C.O.R. Wormald** to the Rectory of Solihull. The new Rector met the band after the peal and warmly thanked them for ringing the peal in his honour*".

Images of these peals from our beautiful peal book are shown below.



In 1953, a new Rector, the **Revd. Harry Hartley B.Sc.**, was welcomed with a peal. We also rang for his appointment as Honorary Canon of Birmingham Cathedral in 1964, and on departure in 1970 we rang both a peal and a quarter peal! Much later, we rang for the diamond jubilee of his ordination in 1991, his 90th birthday in 1992, his diamond wedding anniversary in 1995 and his death in 1998.

Our next Rector, the **Revd. Raymond Wilkinson**, seems to have been particularly well served by the ringers, who rang a peal *and* a quarter peal to welcome him in 1971! Subsequently we marked the 30th anniversary of his ordination (1974), his 30th wedding anniversary (1975), the tenth anniversary of his induction (1981), the 40th anniversary of his ministry (1983), 40 years in the priesthood (1984), his 40th wedding anniversary (1985) and his retirement (1987). Again he was not forgotten; we rang for his 75th birthday (1994) and commemorated his life in 1995.

Even then we kept tabs on his widow, Dorothy, ringing for her 100th birthday in 2018 and commemorating her death in 2021.

Roundabout

We rang for the institution of his replacement, the **Revd. Peter Hawkins**, in 1987, and marked the 25th anniversary of his ordination (1988), his appointment as honorary Canon at Birmingham Cathedral (1992) and for his departure (1996).

Canon Tony Wilds was welcomed in 1997 and bade farewell in 2001 "*on the day of his collation as Archdeacon of Plymouth*".

The first ringing for his replacement, **Father Tim Pilkington**, was for his 50th birthday in 2004. We do not appear to have welcomed him in 2001, but perhaps we tried and failed. Not all of our attempted quarter peals are successful. In 2006 we marked his appointment as Honorary Canon at Birmingham Cathedral and in 2009 his appointment as Area Dean. We then bid him farewell in 2014.

We rang for the institution of the **Revd. Jane Kenchington** in 2015, for her appointment as Honorary Canon at Birmingham Cathedral in 2019 and for her retirement in 2021.

On 6th September 2023, immediately prior to the licensing and installation of the **Revd. Nick Parker**, we added to this list with a quarter peal to welcome him and his family. The formal digital bellringing archive records the ringing as follows:

**St. Alphege Guild
Solihull, West Midlands
St. Alphege
Wednesday, 6th September 2023 in 47 minutes
1260 Plain Bob Minor**



Band in rope order (L to R)

1 Philip D. Pope 2 Linda M. Whitehead 3 Alan Cottrell 4 Margaret Burling
5 Keith D. Whitehead 6 Malcolm J. Paulson © 7 Richard J. Harris

This was rung immediately prior to the licensing and installation of the Revd. Nick Parker as Priest-in-charge of Solihull Parish and Rector designate, to welcome him and his family and followed by open ringing by the above band plus Kathryn Price-Feraud, Triona Jowett and Geoff Ridgway.

250th QP: 2.

We will continue to ring for important milestones in the life of the church such as this.

Keith Whitehead

Roundabout

Scah: Always Providing Help for Those in Need in Solihull Borough



James 2:17 *faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead*

November 2023: The month of **ACTION** for financial donations

SCAH is Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness, a faith-based charity which seeks to relieve the effects of homelessness and poverty in the Solihull Borough, with the help of members of our local churches.

In previous years SCAH organised a flag day to help raise much needed funding.

During the pandemic we were, of course, unable to have a physical flag day event so in the past two years we have held a virtual flag day which proved to be far more productive and brought in much needed additional revenue, so thank you to those kindly donated.

We call this virtual flag day our **Month of Action**.

In November 2023 we will again hold a **Month of Action** in order to help raise much needed revenue.

Why do we need to raise additional funding?

Year to date, up until October 2023, our expenditure has exceeded our income and that is of course unsustainable if allowed to continue. We need to address that. Why is this happening?

As we all know the cost of everything has continued to rise as inflation soared. We are all seeing the effects of that in our everyday lives. For SCAH it means that the cost of each starter pack we provide has risen to new heights. We are spending an additional £10 -15 per pack compared with previous years.

For the last few years SCAH has been gradually using up its reserves to provide its services and this trend has continued in 2023.

We are also helping the refugees who have been placed in Solihull. In the last year or more we have helped families needing assistance who have come from **Ukraine**.

We are therefore still adhering to the SCAH principal objective of providing help for all those in need and poverty in all its forms, not just the homeless and we are sure you will all agree that it is important for us to do so.

So how can you help? During our **Month of Action for November** we ask you to kindly donate to SCAH.

You can also volunteer to be one of our **Volunteer Shoppers**. We need your help. Please email to secretary@scah.org.uk

Please go to www.scah.org.uk, click on the 'Fundraising and Donors' page, then click on the 'CAF Donate' button...and donate a minimum of £5. You will be helping enormously. As an ecumenical Christian organisation, SCAH does not judge people...it just tries to help them. Thanks for your generosity.

SCAH registered charity 1058279

Mysterious Gate stored in the Undercroft at the OBH

This gate has, as far as we know, been stored in the Undercroft at the Oliver Bird Hall for the last 20 years or so. However, nothing is known about it, or where was it placed in the Church. It clearly has not been outside, as there is no weathering at all. It appears to be one of a pair, looking at the picture, but if so, where is the other one? Who commissioned it and indeed who made it and where was it situated? Who agreed to its removal? And now what should happen to it?

Any information would be greatly appreciated. Please send your replies to me on philcgodfrey@btinternet.com

Thank you.

Phil Godfrey



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Let us Pray

Calendar and Prayer Intentions for November 2023

1	All Saints' Day	The three churches of our parish	Maythorn Grove
2	All Souls' Day	Our friends and family members who have died	Melford Hall Road
3	Richard Hooker, Priest & Teacher, 1600	The staff of St Alphege schools	Mell Square
4	Feria	Staff and patients of the Marie Curie hospice	Melplash Avenue
5	4th Sunday before Advent	Rev Sue Chandler and her work in the parish	Merrington Close
6	Leonard, hermit, 6th century	Those in prison and their families	Miall Park Road
7	Willibrord of York, Bishop, 739	Anne, our Bishop	Middlewood Close
8	Saints & Martyrs of England	Those suffering for their faith	Milcote Road
9	Margery Kempe, Mystic, c.1440	Members of religious communities	Mill Lane
10	Leo the Great, Bp of Rome, 461	Our parish administrators	Mirfield Road
11	Martin, Bishop of Tours, c.397	Those serving in the armed forces	Moat Lane
12	Remembrance Sunday	Those who have given their lives in conflict	Monastery Drive
13	Charles Simeon, Priest, Divine, 1836	Our Parish Wardens, Pam & Andrew	Monkspath Hall Road
14	Samuel Seabury, Bishop, 1796	Hymn writers	Muswell Close
15	Feria	Spiritual directors and counsellors	Naseby Road
16	Margaret, Queen of Scotland, 1093	The work of Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness	Netherwood Close
17	Hugh, Bp of Lincoln 1200	Local Mental Health support services	Newfield Close
18	Elizabeth of Hungary, Philanthropist, 1231	Franciscan communities and members	New Road
19	2nd Sunday before Advent	Paul Evans, St Alphege Verger	Northwick Crescent
20	Priscilla Lydia Sellon, a Restorer of the Religious Life in the Church of England, 1876	Those exploring religious vocations	Oaken Drive
21	Feria	Those caring for a family member who is ill	Oakland Close
22	Cecilia, Martyr at Rome, c.230	Musicians, singers and choirs of our parish	Oakley Wood Drive
23	Clement, Bishop & Martyr, c.100	Archdeacon Jenny Tomlinson	Oakwood Croft
24	Feria	Linda Hicks, Parish Director of Children and Families Ministry	Oldington Grove
25	Isaac Watts, Hymnwriter, 1748	Chris Thomas, St Alphege Director of Music	Oldway Drive
26	Feast of Christ the King	That we may point others to Christ	Orchard Avenue
27	Feria	Rev Nick Parker, Priest-in-charge of our parish	Park Avenue
28	Feria	The work of our Parish Church Council	Park Road
29	Day of Intercession & Thanksgiving for the Missionary Work of the Church	Our Pioneer Minister, Suzette Maguire	Perryford Drive
30	Andrew the Apostle	The Readers of our Parish	Pinfold Road

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

From the St. Alphege Register

Baptisms

None

Weddings

19th October Alexander Beard & Amy Deal

Funerals

31st October Ron Crowdy

Memorial Services

14th October Philippa Wareing

Names taken from the Chantry Book for Remembrance in November

Lawrie Andrew
Mabel Campkin
Alan Clarke
Peter Cooper
Sydney Flood
Frederick Fowler
Joan Freeth

Margaret Harris
Alexander Herd
Peter Herd
Norman Jewers
Arthur Middleton
Lawrence Albert Patey
Gordon Ross

Rachel Scarff
Pat Sharrock
Leslie Starbuck
Dennis Tate
William Tew
Joan Watts
Frank Wright



**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 2023

The Feast of All Saints, on 1st November, marks the beginning of what has come to be informally named the Kingdom Season. The four Sundays which make up the season are a continuation of 'ordinary time' and used to be part of a series of nine Sundays before Advent. The Church's year draws to its close with the Feast of Christ the King. The liturgical colour for the season is red or green.

Wednesday 1st November - All Saints' Day

Holy Eucharist at St Michael's Chapel, 10 a.m. All Saints' Day celebrates men and women in whose lives the Church as a whole has seen the grace of God powerfully at work. It is a time to be encouraged by the example of the saints and to recall that holiness can grow in the ordinary circumstances of human life, as well as in the extraordinary events.

Thursday 2nd November - All Souls' Day

Holy Eucharist at St Alphege, 10.30 a.m. & 7.30 p.m. Also known as The Commemoration of the Faithful Departed, this day celebrates the saints in a more local and intimate way. It allows us to remember with thanksgiving before God those whom we have known more directly: those who gave us life, or who nurtured us in faith.

Sunday 5th November

Commemoration Service at St Alphege, 5 p.m. At this service we will remember those whom we have known personally who have died.

Saturday 11th November - Remembrance Day

Act of Remembrance at St Alphege, 10.50 a.m, to remember those who have died in wars past and present.

Sunday 12th November - Remembrance Sunday

Today across our parish we explore the theme of memory, both corporate and individual, as we confront issues of war and peace, loss and sacrifice. This will be the theme at services in all three churches in our parish.

Sunday 26th November - Christ the King

The annual cycle of the Church's year ends with the Feast of Christ the King. The year that begins with the hope of the coming Messiah ends with the proclamation of his universal rule. The Feast of Christ the King returns us to the Advent theme of judgement, with which the cycle begins once more the following Sunday.

A full-page background image featuring a statue of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The statue is a light-colored stone or marble, showing Mozart from the waist up, standing and facing slightly to the right. He is wearing a long, double-breasted coat with large buttons and a high collar. His right arm is extended forward, and his left arm is bent, holding a book. The statue is set against a clear blue sky, with the branches and leaves of trees with autumn foliage visible in the background.

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2023**

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November 2023 Services

Wednesday 1st November – All Saints Day

St. Michael's	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	7.30 p.m.	Eucharist

Thursday 2nd November – All Souls

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	7.30 p.m.	Eucharist

Sunday 5th November – 4th Sunday Before Advent

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Eucharist
Oliver Bird Hall	9.15 a.m.	The Junction
St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	New Door Commemoration Service
St. Helen's	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Michael's	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist

Wednesday 8th November

St. Michael's Chapel	9.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
Bryanston Road	10:00:00	Eucharist

Thursday 9th November

St Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
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Saturday 11th November – Remembrance Day

St. Alphege	10.50 a.m.	Remembrance
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Sunday 12th November – 3rd Sunday Before Advent (Remembrance Sunday)

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	9.15 a.m.	All Age Eucharist
St. Alphege	10.45 a.m.	Civic Service - Remembrance
St. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Evensong
St. Helen's	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Michael's	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist

Wednesday 15th November

St. Michael's Chapel	9.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
Bryanston Road	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist

Thursday 16th November

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
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Sunday 19th November – 2nd Sunday Before Advent

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Eucharist
Oliver Bird Hall	9.15 a.m.	The Junction
St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Evensong
St. Helen's	10.00 a.m.	Morning Prayer
St. Michael's	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist

Wednesday 22nd November

St. Michael's Chapel	9.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
Bryanston Road	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist

Thursday 23rd November

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
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Sunday 26th November – Christ the King

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Eucharist
Zoom	9.15 a.m.	The Junction
St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Evensong
St. Helen's	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Michael's	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist

Wednesday 29th November

St. Michael's Chapel	9.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
Bryanston Road	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist

Thursday 30th November

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
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Sunday 3rd December – Advent Sunday

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Eucharist
Oliver Ball Hall	9.15 a.m.	The Junction
St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Advent Carol Service
St. Helen's	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Michael's	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist



The Guardians of St Alphege Parish Church

September was a busy month for The Guardians as we had both the A.G.M. and a social event two days later.

I am delighted to say that the A.G.M. was much better attended than last year. Thank you to all those who came, which included several of our new members and our new Rector Designate, the Revd. Nick Parker. The meeting was completed in half an hour, which I consider ample time for an A.G.M.! We then went on to enjoy socialising with a glass of wine.

Then on the Saturday, we had the *Wine & Cheese* event. We are very grateful to Caroline and Allen Kerr who hosted it at their home. The event was very well attended, and I think everyone enjoyed themselves. Thank you to the Friends Committee who organised it. The event (including the raffle) raised £311 for the Guardians. Thanks to everyone who came.

Our next social event will be *Coffee, Mulled Wine & Mince Pies* on Friday 15th December. It will be held at Margaret Oswald's home, 9 Ulleries Road, Olton Solihull, B91 8DS, 11.00 am to 1 p.m. The tickets will be £5.00 each, plus the raffle. You will be able to pay on the door, but please, to help with catering, do let us know if you plan to come. 0121 722 4092 or margaretoswald43@gmail.com

As usual, I must ask anyone who would like to join us to contact me (see above). The annual subscription is only £15 per person or £20 for a couple. Membership does not entail any arduous duties; all we require of you is your subscription and, we hope, your attendance at some of our very enjoyable events.

As some of you will be aware, there is more structural work to be done to the church. The Trustees have been approached and have said that they need to see the contractors' estimates before they can make any decisions on how much we can contribute. We have been advised that this is unlikely to be before the New Year, but we will keep you updated.

The Trustees

Wednesday Lunchtime Music Recitals, 1.10pm to 2pm

All are welcome to the recitals. 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 available from 12.30 p.m.

Isabel Baumber

1 st November	No recital - Half term
8 th November	Duncan Honeybourne, piano
11 th November	Varvara Maggs, piano
22 nd November	Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Harp Department
29th November	No recital - Journey to the Stable



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 Solihull Parish News 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 2023:

- 1st October Thinking of you all today in remembrance of Jeni my dear friend, Ann.
- 7th October Royal Marine Ashley Hicks. Your love and laughter will live on in our hearts.
- 17th October Leonard Kidner. Remembering you on your birthday.
- 19th October In loving memory of Nicole Potts on her birthday.
- 21st October In loving memory of Gwen Mullis on her birthday.
- 23rd October In loving memory of my wife Alma Reah on this our wedding anniversary.
- 25th October Raymond Colston Horswill 02.02.1928 – 25.10.2008.
Much loved by all who knew him. Devoted husband and father.
- 31st October In loving memory of Vivien Soden on her birthday.
- 31st October In loving memory of Nicola Blakeman.

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:

<https://www.solihullparish.org.uk/church-hall-hire/>

or contact the Parish Office at:

OBHBookings@solihullparish.org.uk



September is often a time for new beginnings, and this year has been no exception for the choir. Our new academic year started with the joyous occasion of the Revd. Nick Parker's Licensing Service where our combined choirs sang Nick's choice of music alongside the St. Alphege and St. Michael's Bands, ably supported by Stephen Perrins at the organ.

We then went straight into hard work with rehearsals the following two evenings and welcome drinks at our first Friday evening rehearsal, making the most of the glorious September weather.

We have welcomed two new senior girl choristers, who are both very appreciated new members of the team. They have already formed new friendships and are learning the repertoire quickly. Two new children have started at Minims as well, our special group for five to six year olds, and we hope that they enjoy the weekly sessions where they will learn musical skills in an age-appropriate way.

Chris is hard at work with a new outreach project. Generously funded by the *Church Music Trust*, he is developing choirs in four local junior schools. The choirs will have weekly training rehearsals and termly concerts in church – a Christmas Carol Festival, a performance of the popular children's cantata *Captain Noah and his Floating Zoo*, and a "rising stars" performance in the summer. The schools involved are Widney, Tudor Grange Academy Yew Tree, Sharmans Cross and Oak Cottage. As well as the educational and outreach benefits of the project itself, we hope that one or two children might decide to try out the Church Choir for themselves and form a longer-term involvement with us.



Moving on to dates for your diaries, please do look out for further information about the following events, and make a note of the dates now:

Friday 3rd to Saturday 4th November – St Alphege Beer Festival – a wonderful community and fundraising event, held in the Oliver Bird Hall. Do get in touch if you can help on either of the days or come along to enjoy drinks and fellowship. There will of course be plenty of choice of real ales, but there are also alternative drinks – you don't have to like beer!

Saturday 11th November, 7pm – Gloria! Our autumn concert this year will feature the ever-popular 'Gloria' by Vivaldi, as well as Bach's Cantata 131 'Aus der Tiefe'. There will also be the choral favourite 'Ascribe unto the Lord' by S. S. Wesley and works by Howells and Bainton. We hope to see you there.

Isabel Baumber



St Alphege Church Choirs

*Autumn
Concert*

GLORIA!

November 11th, 7pm

VIVALDI GLORIA

BACH CANTATA 131

CHORAL WORKS BY HOWELLS, BANTON AND WESLEY

Tickets £12 for adults, U18s free,
interval drink included
www.trybooking.co.uk/CTQW



Here at St. Helen's, as in other churches, we are entering a very busy time of the year. As I write this, we look towards the parish All Souls services, when those whom we have lost are remembered. We look slightly further on to our acts of remembrance in November and of course then on into Advent and finally Christmas. A busy time indeed.

And of course, this busy time begins with Harvest celebrations, as we thank God for the abundance of nature and his gifts to us, whilst reminding ourselves that not everyone is as fortunate as we are. So this is a time of year to think about sharing the gifts of God's creation.

Here at St. Helen's, we held two wonderful Harvest services. The first was on 1st October, when we invited our neighbours into church for a Harvest celebration. We heard some wonderful testimonies from Sheila Cross, Nia Budd and Nick Parker, who each chose a hymn and then explained why that particular hymn meant so much to them. I think it is fair to say that everyone was moved by the words which they heard. We were again very pleased and lucky to welcome the St. Michael's Singers and the Parish Puppets were a huge success, singing *God will provide*. We were reminded by Chris, Roger and Wendy to count our blessings, which I think we all did as we watched the short drama which they acted out for us. A huge thank you to everyone who played any part in what was a wonderful celebration.

On 9th October it was our great pleasure to welcome into church Greswold School for a harvest celebration. The entire school came in two lots because we could not fit them all in for one session! We shared with over 500 children the message of God's love in creation, and the importance of saying thank you and, again, of sharing. Linda brought along a lucky dip, which the children thoroughly enjoyed. The chocolate was definitely voted as a favourite, the jury is out on the Marmite! And the teachers too seemed to have a wonderful time. Again, thanks to all of those who helped on that wonderful morning.

Look out for information about Advent groups at St. Helen's which should be available soon. We wish our friends throughout the parish well, and send our love.

Rev.Sue

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St Helen's Christmas Fayre

Sat 25th Nov 2023

11.00am - 3.00pm



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Bottle Tombola Toys & Games.
Treasure Hunt Raffle
Cards & Decorations Crafts
Human Fruit Machine



Father Christmas
Solihull Young Dancers
St Alphege Choir



Admission £1, kids free

Lunches & Refreshments



Proceeds to:
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Solihull Children's Storehouse



Leading a Spiritual Life

First, a huge THANK YOU to those who prayed for and sponsored me and my husband David on our '60 miles within 6 hours' sponsored walk, to raise money for Marie Curie Hospice (local) and MIND (national). As I type the money is still being collected in, but from what I know I am hopeful that we will be around the £1,000 mark across the two charities. I am totally amazed and humbled by that response – thank you again!

I will let you know the full amount as soon as I know it myself.

For September my diary had a walking focus, with the sponsored walk on the 10th-12th and, on the 1st-3rd I was meant to be going on a retreat based around 'A Spirituality of Walking'. Unfortunately, with only a week to go, I was disappointed to hear that the retreat was cancelled.

On reflection, as much as I was looking forward to the retreat, I realise that I was also intrigued to hear what the retreat leader had to say on the subject, as I have personally been aware of a spirituality of walking since David, my husband, and I first walked the Hadrian's Wall national footpath, back in 2012.

As many others have found out too, "walking is a spiritual practice that yields so many dividends: replenishment of the soul, connection with the natural world, problem-solving, self-esteem, health and healing, and heightened attention. It is deeply restorative. Throughout time, walking has played an enormous role in the devotional life of people from all the world's religions: prayers and mantra practice while walking, pilgrimage to sacred sites, walking the labyrinth, walking meditation, and informal spiritual practices that make the most of strolling, sauntering, or cavorting." (spiritualityandpractice.com)

Here are just three aspects of a Spirituality of walking that jumped out at me along Hadrian's Wall:

The Rhythm of the Day

Back then, walking our very first long-distance path – largely due to my saying, "I'm not leaving the Northeast without walking Hadrian's Wall!" – I was struck by the totally new experience. All our days were composed of the rhythm of – breakfast – walk – arrive – eat – sleep – repeat. This also included the 'ritual' of dressing our feet for the day, with tape on 'hot spots', Vaseline between toes, and blister plasters where needed. Each day's activities, as described, were all consuming, and all other concerns fell by the wayside, meaning most nights were spent in very peaceful sleep*.

*Unless we woke up during the night hungry, having used up all our reserves on fuel for the journey. Flapjack on the bedside table helped in this instance. More on that in a moment ☺.

What rhythms and/or rituals do you see in your hobbies/ past-times or in the pattern of your day? Where is God in them? Why not stop and give thanks for his presence throughout.

Food as Fuel

One of the biggest lessons I learnt on that journey along Hadrian's Wall was about seeing food as fuel. By the afternoon of the second day, with four days to go, I was struggling. When we saw a sign for a tearoom up ahead, I rallied in desperation, and we got there half-an-hour before they closed. I still remember it so clearly: I had a cheese scone, some paracetamol, a pot of tea which I automatically put sugar in – I don't take sugar ordinarily – and I took off my boots to rest my feet. Within half-an-hour I felt so much better, and I concluded that I hadn't been eating often enough to resource the amount of exercise we were doing. Lesson learned, and I've rarely made that mistake since.

What do you fuel yourself with? When did you last pick up your Bible and feast on God's word?

People of the Way

It has been noted in Christian circles that movement seems to encourage dialogue and conviviality, leading to richer conversations with soul mates, friends, and even strangers.

On our journey we discovered that there is a real camaraderie amongst all the people walking the full distance of the wall. One evening, we ended up at the same B&B as a Dutch couple, whom we kept passing and being passed by. We ate together that day and, over welcoming coffee and cake by the B&B owner, we shared stories about our lives and our journey so far. A lovely, memorable experience, which left me to explore the term 'the people of the way' – a term used to describe the early followers of Jesus Christ. The term was used because Jesus referred to himself as "the way" in John 14:6: *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

Why not spend some time now meditating on that scripture? What difference does it make to your life?

Finally, I must stress that I count myself blessed that I am still able to walk distances and will continue to do so while I am physically able. It's a big part of my spiritual life.

What's a big part of yours? I'd love to hear about it!

Thanks for listening!

Suzette

At the end of September, we celebrated our Patronal Festival when we celebrate St. Michael and all Angels. The cover on the September of 'Parish News' depicted the icon of St Michael which resides in our chapel and is a constant reminder of the saint to whom our church is dedicated.

We were delighted that the service was presided over by the Revd. Nick Parker who gave us a very thought-provoking sermon, touching on the themes from the readings for the day.

If you look for St Michael from the saint of all information "Saint" Google you will find the following:

Angels visit all people when they die, believers say. The leader of all angels-- Archangel Michael--appears just before the moment of death to those who haven't yet connected to God, giving them a last chance at salvation before their time to decide runs out. The guardian angels who are assigned to care for each person's soul throughout their lifetimes also encourage them to trust God. Then, Michael and the guardian angels work together to escort the souls of those who are saved to heaven immediately after they pass away.

So however you may view saints and angels, clearly St. Michael is an important one to have on your side.

We were doubly blessed at the service as we had our Music Group to lead our singing, always popular with our congregation.

After the service we celebrated with wine and cake, and even the cake had a depiction of St. Michael's.

Talking of our Music Group, they had a double gig on that day as they were leading the singing with our friends at St. Helen's who were celebrating harvest in the afternoon with an outdoor service. The Music Group are certainly busy. Seems they might be needing a Roadie soon!

In October we celebrated our Harvest Thanksgiving. As before we were invited to bring non-perishable food to donate to 'Helping Hands' food bank. Although we live in the town and are somewhat detached from the countryside it is well to remember that our food does not magically appear on the shelves of Tesco's and there are many people who need help.

November is the month of Remembrance, and we shall hold our Remembrance service at our Sunday Eucharist on 12th November.

Paul Smith



CHURCH 4 FAMILIES

November

Sunday Worship

(More details overleaf!)

St Alphege

On **5th and 19th November** the Junction will meet **IN PERSON** at 9.15 a.m. in the Oliver Bird Hall.

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

On **26th November** the Junction will meet **ON ZOOM**

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

On **12th November** everyone will meet in the church building at 9.15am for a Remembrance Sunday service for all ages.

St Helen

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

On **26th November** St Helen's Sunday club will meet during the 10 a.m. service with an exciting action packed session for children age 0-11.

Don't miss it!

St Michael

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

Other Activities

Friday 17th November **Messy Church** St Helen's Church 4 p.m.-6 p.m.

Praise and Play Every Friday 9.30-10.30 a.m. Oliver Bird Hall

There's lots happening in the Parish on Sundays in November!

In the St Alphege church building at 9.15a.m. on 12th November
there will be a very special

Remembrance Sunday All age service.

Here are the themes for the Junction in November:

5th Nov **God's Saints** - The puppet team will be joining us to help us celebrate All Saints Day and of course we'll be doing a craft activity.

19th Nov **International Children's Day** - We'll hear the story of Jesus and the children and we'll do a craft activity to remind us that we are all special and Jesus loves us.

20th Nov **On Zoom - Christ the King** - Jesus is a king, but not like most of the kings we know of. What does a king do? What makes Jesus a special sort of King? **We'll be making crowns!**



**ST HELEN'S
SUNDAY CLUB**



Join us at St Helen's Church, St Helen's Road, B91 2DA (off Buryfield Road) at 10am on the 4th Sunday of each month for an exciting action packed session for children age 0-11.

Sunday 26th November 2023

Don't miss it!

For more information contact Linda Hicks

l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk



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. Finally we'll finish with a tasty hot tea for everyone!



4pm - 6pm on Friday

17th November and 15th December



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EVERYONE! Children, bring your friends, but be sure to bring an adult

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l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk
to book your place.





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Every Friday in the main Hall of the Oliver Bird Hall
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If you want to know more ring Linda on
0121 270 7390
or 07838 670772

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Youth Stuff

Unfortunately we are not able to hold meetings at present, but hope to resume soon.

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After the Licensing Service



What a night, and on the hottest night of the year! There must have been over two hundred people in the OBH, after the wonderful service to license Revd Nick Parker as Priest-in-Charge and Rector Designate of Solihull Parish.

Mothers' Union coordinated and served the tea coffee and cakes, and David Sturdee and his son in law organised the bar. People from across the parish donated cakes - we really had a big spread. It was certainly hard work setting up, serving so many people and clearing up afterwards, but it was very worthwhile, and a fitting finale to what was such a joyous occasion.

We are really lucky, in our branch of Mothers' Union, that we have younger members who are able to organize these large parish events. Thank you to all those who provided cakes, served tea and coffee, wine and soft drinks and stayed late to clear the hall ready for the next day.



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Journeying through Advent, Advent Sunday 3rd December

An important and perennial question is how to make the most of this season of preparation, so that our hearts as well as heads end up in the right place by the time we arrive at Christmas – with all the celebrations and busyness this brings.

Two good opportunities are BRF's booklet: *'Journeying through Advent with New Daylight'* and the Archbishop of York's Advent Book for 2023: *'Stick with love'* by Bishop Arun Arora.



Journeying through Advent
with New Daylight

Daily Bible readings
and group study material

This year we plan to use the former as an aid for discussion in our home/study groups. Details of when and where these will meet during Advent will be shared in due course and I hope you might wish to join one. Those unable to join a group can travel the same journey as the booklets are designed for individual as well as for group reflection. We will be ordering 100 copies for the parish at £2.50 each and ask that people contact the parish office to reserve theirs (whether for group or individual study).

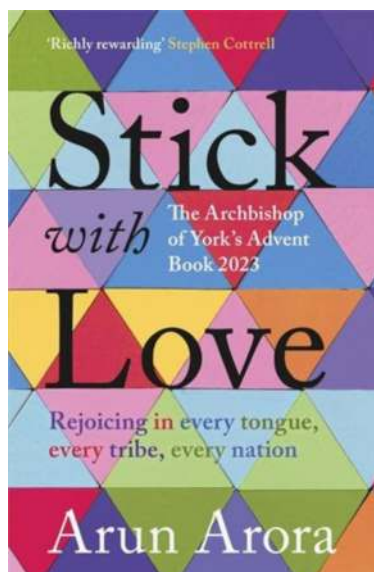
The Archbishop's Advent Book is subtitled, *'Rejoicing in Every Tongue, Every Tribe, Every Nation'*, and describes itself as a series of reflections, readings, and reminders, to guide us through the Advent season with God's love underpinning each story. It concludes with a Christmas Eve sentiment from Martin Luther King: "I must stick with love... hate is too great a burden to

bear", a profound reflection giving the book its fitting title. Copies are available from St. Alphege Church bookstall, priced £10 (RRP £10.99), or may be ordered through Fran Halstead: fran.halstead@gmail.com

Speaking personally, I can testify that clergy are far from being immune to the risk of losing sight of what Advent and Christmas are truly about – namely the hope of Christ's coming, offering light amidst the darkness. In addition to looking forward to the many wonderful special services to which we will welcome old friends, newcomers, and visitors, I also plan to join one of the Advent groups so that my heart would be opened anew to the presence of Christ in all who will join us.

Whatever your plans, I pray that God would give you fresh hope and peace, and that with faith renewed we may together greet our coming Saviour with joy.

Rev. Nick



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Rowing the Thames

40 years ago, when training for the priesthood in Cambridge, I coxed an Eight. It was said, no doubt with some justification, that I was seen on the river rather more than I was seen in the lecture room. Therefore, it was a great pleasure when a friend of mine recently invited me to cox again. This time not in an Eight but a Thames Waterman's Cutter, which has 6 oars and fixed seats. I did confess to being over 3 stones heavier than when I coxed on the Cam, but this was waved away as being of no barrier to my once again occupying the cox's seat.

The boat, called the *Belle Founder*, belongs to the Worshipful Company of Founders, one of the City's oldest Livery Companies, being established to monitor and control the production and use of brass and other non-precious metals. Today a key aspect of the Founders' activity is giving grants to young people working or researching the metallurgy. University bursaries are given, especially at Imperial, Birmingham, and Manchester Universities, as well as a number of schools being supported financially to develop work in materials science and engineering.

My friend, a very fit retired Bishop, had the idea of extending our rowing activities from the regular races that we participate in on the Tideway, to a sponsored row down the Thames, raising money to support the Livery Company's grant making charity. My friend is a natural enthusiast and a very persuasive clergyman, and so enlisted me and a whole host of other rowers, to get sponsorship and then row the Thames (or at least part of it) over 5 days in July.

Consequently, there were 7 rowers and 1 cox who set out from Lechlade (the point at which the Thames becomes navigable-ish) on 8th July. I add an 'ish' to the word navigable, as very quickly we discovered that the river is not as wide as is needed for a rowing boat with 12ft 6ins oars sticking out each side. The river banks on the upper reaches of the



Thames are thick with reeds and rushes, that extend well into the flow of the river. To many of course these are a beautiful attribute to the river environment and landscape. However, if trying to propel a craft, which requires at least 55ft of clear water to move at all, they're frankly a nightmare. To add to the sense of not being in rural Gloucester and Oxfordshire but half way up the Amazon Jungle, the river is winding. Actually, that is an understatement – it is winds incredibly, requiring on occasion, not only full use of the rudder (which of course puts a major brake on the run of the boat) but stopping, reversing, and virtually doing a three-point turn. Also, to add to the joys of upper Thames boating, it poured with rain. However, as is true of all true river dwellers (remember Ratty in *Wind-in the Willows*) the crew were a jolly lot, enjoying the cox's struggles with reeds and bends with great delight.

A long day (we started a bit after 9.00 a.m.) and ended at 7.30 p.m. at Osney Lock in Oxford. Exhausted but determined we discovered the nutritious delights of something called Five Guys and rested in the grand surroundings of Keble College.



The next day the rain had ceased and good weather accompanied us all the way to Shillingford Bridge, just north of Pangbourne, which was our stopping place for the night. Inevitably during the day, we went through some serious rowing country. Past the Oxford College boat houses and City rowing clubs. We tried to look our stylish best as we were passed by Eights, Fours, and Sculls, all being rowed by people who exuded the word athlete, and felt that with a bit of imagination, we didn't look totally out of place. The crew desired a refreshment break a little beyond Wallingford, so I spotted a rather attractive looking jetty, where we pulled up. The jetty was part of a rather impressive looking complex, which on further investigation had the letters OUBC all over it, which we of course eventually worked out referred to Oxford University Boat Club. While not exactly looking like international rowers, we did feel a sort of pride that we had moored in the place of the Blue Boat.

Continued on next page

Rowing the Thames, continued.

The following day saw us getting into our stride, with a quality of rowing that only comes with time together on the river. The river was now very wide, which at one level made the cox's job much easier. However, in other ways more challenging, as now there were a lot more other craft on the water and few of them propelled by human power. Dodging large motor vessels now became the name of the game, not all skippered by mariners who had much respect for smaller craft or for the general understanding that boats stick to the right. Also, the wind became a factor. The reeds and rushes of the river's upper sections do protect from the wind, but the wider sections of lower stretches do expose boats to the vagaries of wind, which needless to say, isn't always blowing from the most advantageous direction. We therefore had some serious headwinds to contend with, which are sapping, at least for the rowers, if not for the good old cox.

The day ended at Reading, where we were fortunate to be able to secure the boat in the Reading Canoe Club lockup (with all due respect to the residents of Reading, we were slightly concerned that if we moored up in the centre, we might tempt those leaving local hostelrys who fancied a midnight river trip). The next day began with one of the many locks (there are 45 between Lechlade and Richmond Bridge) and we were then lead fairly quickly to the centre of British rowing, namely Henley on Thames. The Henley Regatta had taken place a week earlier and so all of the tents and stands were still in place, which gave us just a little sense that we were part of that great event. We did the 2km of the Henley course, the other way round of course, in rather more than the 5.53 minutes set by the top crew. As we headed towards Windsor, our stop for the night, we were treated to increasing numbers of impressive riverside properties, which inevitably led to the quiz game of 'guess the value'.

The evening in Windsor was very pleasant, not least that we were treated to an excellent restaurant meal by the Master of the Livery Company and his Upper and Under Warden. The latter is Alan Hughes, who I discovered was married at St. Alphege. Alan is the owner of the famous Whitechapel Bell Foundry, and a former ringer at St. Alphege (Bell Founding is one of the crafts closely associated with the Founders).

The last day was the longest and most challenging for the rowers (and the cox, as river traffic continued to increase). However, the 32 miles to Richmond Bridge, journey's end, were covered in good time seeing us arrive at exactly 6.15 p.m. Although a long and tiring day, the crew responded to the cox's command to up the rating to 32 and row firm for the last 400 metres (although he was acutely aware of wide-spread muttering under the breath). After three cheers for crew and Belle Founder, the journey came to an end.

Over £6,000 was raised to support the Founders' grant making charities, which included sponsorship from Solihull. Many thanks on behalf of the Founders for all the support, it is greatly appreciated.

The Venerable Paul Taylor



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Update from the Parish Wardens

How good it was to be at the Licensing of Nick Parker as Priest in Charge and Rector Designate of the Parish, and very good to see so many in the church, including those representing many outside organisations, who were able to welcome Nick to our Parish. During the service, too, symbols were brought up to represent the many facets of Nick's ministry. Thanks to all who did so much to make the service and the refreshments afterwards such memorable events.

We are pleased to welcome our third Parish Administrator, Mrs Rekha Anand, who started with us at the beginning of October. Rekha will be working in the Parish office on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays. Once trained, her main responsibilities will be OBH bookings and the Churchbuilder database. Welcome, Rekha, and we pray you will enjoy working with us.

The Community Harvest Service at St Helen's was a wonderful time including great music from the St. Michael's Band, three inspiring testimonies and the amazing Puppets rendering of 'Gloria Gaynor's' 'God will provide'. Thanks to those who worked so hard for this and all the harvest services. The return of the Harvest Supper was very much welcomed too. 70 people attended this lovely social occasion in the OBH and learnt a lot about Nick Parker, his life and family. The fish & chip supper followed by apple pie and custard went down very well too. The small profit will go towards the new lighting in St. Alphege Church. Perhaps we should now challenge others to organize events for the future. We already have one or two ideas; if you have ideas but don't know how to go about putting them into practice, do let us know.

We are now beginning to look forward to the structure and vision for the Parish and to this end by the time you read this, the Review of the Team Scheme will have been started by Archdeacon Jenny, and we will have had a Vision Day for Clergy, Readers, Staff and Wardens to consider various aspects of the Parish and plans for the future. The outcome of these will be shared in the coming months.

Nick has re-started weekday Morning Prayers in our church buildings – details on the website and elsewhere in Parish News. These are very valuable short times of coming together to worship God and to pray for the Parish. Do feel free to come and join them when you can.

The Men's Group had an excellent breakfast at the Greville Arms when we welcomed Martin Pleasance from Christians Against Poverty (CAP) who told us something of his Christian Journey and the vital work CAP are doing to help those struggling with debt. This may be something we can get more involved with in the future.

Congratulations to Suzette and David for completing their 60-mile sponsored walk and for raising so much for the charities.

We do mourn the death of Ron Crowdy, who apart from being a stalwart member of St. Michael's and the Parish in general, was our Parish Treasurer and St. Michael's Treasurer. He did these jobs fantastically well, and will be much missed. Thank you, Ron, for all you did. Let us keep Linda and family in our prayers still. Thank you too for our other Treasurers who keep us in order in so many ways and thanks to Tim, the St. Alphege Treasurer, who is taking on the task of Parish Treasurer until we can recruit someone.

As you can see there is much to give thanks for and to pray for.

Pam Price
Andrew Williams
October 2023

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Solihull - Borough of Sanctuary

In March this year, Solihull held its first forum as a Borough of Sanctuary. It had recently become part of the National City of Sanctuary network, which - city by city, community by community - is building a more welcoming UK for people forced to flee their homes. The charity began in Sheffield in 2005 because it was "a city that takes pride in the welcome it offers to people in need of safety".

The idea of the network is that it helps to coordinate and support all the many initiatives that are in place which encourage inclusivity, compassion and solidarity for people who have come to live in the UK from a forced displacement background. There are many different groups across a community who offer help and support including faith groups, schools, colleges, local councils, libraries, arts facilities etc. A City or Borough of Sanctuary initiative brings them alongside each other and recognises how support may best be given to reach as many as possible of those in need. It can help to bring about a culture change across the wider community. For more information, visit <https://cityofsanctuary.org>.

In March 2023 the first Solihull Partnership Forum was held and was attended by people from Solihull Council, West Midlands Police, Solihull Library, The Department of Work and Pensions, and representatives of 13 charities and/or community organisations. Since then, specific subgroups have been set up which include faith groups, schools outreach and arts and culture.

Solihull Parish is playing its part. We are part of the Faith Group subgroup and once a week a group of volunteers from across the parish meet in the OBH and offer English conversation classes to asylum seekers who are living locally. The clients have widely differing standards of English, but over tea, coffee and biscuits there is much concentration as the clients engage with the work sheets that are used as a basis for the teaching and wider conversation. They are keen to learn, and all the volunteers enjoy the opportunity to come alongside people who have led such different lives to our own: people from Iran, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Syria. They may not stay long-term in Solihull, but whilst they are living here we can offer them hospitality and a place of welcome and compassion. In doing so, we are honouring the command given to God's people in the Old Testament:

Don't mistreat any foreigners who live in your land. Instead, treat them as well as you treat your own people and love them as much as you love yourself. Remember, you were once foreigners in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God. (Leviticus 19.33-34)

This teaching holds true for us, too, as we seek to build God's kingdom here in Solihull.

If you would like to know more and perhaps come along to help, please contact me.

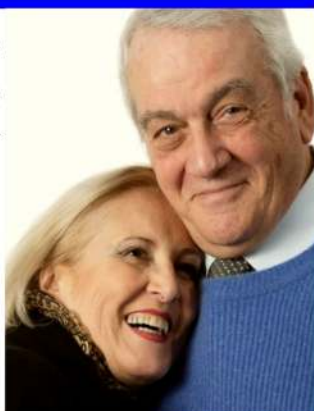
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Matters of Faith

The Revd. Martin Tunnicliffe suggests that we should

'Consider' Creation

Most of the first-century crowds who flocked round Jesus came, as he himself did, from peasant stock. One of the attractions was the simple fact that Jesus seldom, if ever, was smitten with anxiety. And there was plenty for poorer people to be anxious about at that time. Life was, by our standards, extremely precarious. Politically, they were subject to a regime that could be brutal: their climate often brought drought and famine: standards of health were so grim that swathes of children never reached teenage, let alone adulthood; and adults seldom lived beyond forty. In Jesus, they found a controversial teacher who was exceptionally serene and untroubled, simply because he was secure in his faith in a God who was not only creative, but re-creative, and loving, and compassionate. In other words, the God Jesus spoke about was one who cared deeply and constantly for his creation, and, specifically for his human creation. The most appealing example of this attitude is to be found in the so-called Sermon on the Mount, in the Gospels of Matthew (6.25-34) and Luke (12. 22-34).

"Consider the birds . . . consider the flowers." The word *consider* is important. It derives from star-gazing, not in the trivial sense, but as serious astronomy. Lately, disability has compelled me to sit still rather often and gaze out of the window. I began to *consider* the birds: they shot across my vision from shrub to shrub at high velocity, making me wonder why on earth they never crashed. They are created to perform a feat that no man-made flying machine could ever do.

Consider the flowers. Artificial ones can be very good: but if you stick them in the ground outside, there is no way that they can simulate the beauty, the delicacy and scent of, say, a wind-stirred, bee-visited rose. Come to that, can any scientist create a single blade of living grass? But a loving Creator has provided millions of them, just for my lawn; and how many for the world?! Listening contemplatively to this wonderful Saying has given me insight into the whole phenomenon of creation at a time when the fragment of it which we inhabit is, in a timely way, revealing its fragility.

Years ago, I came across a lovely worship song which I used to sing with the schoolchildren. It goes well antiphonally. I used to divide the children into two groups, each group singing the lines alternately . . .

*Carpenter, carpenter, make me a tree,
That's the work of somebody far greater than me:
Gardener, gardener, make me a flow'r,
That's the work of somebody with far greater pow'r.
(Chorus)
Somebody greater than you or me
Put the apple in the apple tree:
The flow'r in the earth and the fish in the sea
Are by somebody greater than you or me.*

Another verse goes: *Now electrician, will you light a star,
That's the work of somebody who's greater by far:
Plumber, connect up the river and sea,
That's the work of somebody far greater than me.
(Chorus)*

In a very simple and charming way, the song says it all. I regret that I cannot trace the origin: if anyone knows, perhaps they might write to the Editor of Parish News.

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For Your Diary

Thursday 2nd November : 1.30pm in the OBH. *A Blue Plaque for Suffragette Sisters.*

A talk by Susan Leach.

Thursday 16th November : 10.30am in church. *MU Corporate Eucharist.*

Thursday 7th December : 1.00pm in the OBH. *Advent Lunch* followed at 2pm by

We can arrange lifts to these meetings.

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

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**.



Unveiling a Blue Plaque to two Suffragette Sisters

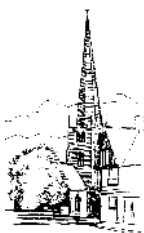
A talk by Susan Leach about the years of work leading up to the ceremony earlier this year.

Thursday 2nd November
1.30pm in the Oliver Bird Hall.
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<i>St Alphege Stewardship Recorder</i>	Frank Upton , 1 Rectory Road	0121 705 2963
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