

# SOLIHULL PARISH NEWS



No. 552

JANUARY 2024

PRICE £1.00

# 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:  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> January  
 9.15 a.m. All Age Eucharist  
 11.00 a.m. Sung Eucharist followed by refreshments  
 5.00 p.m. Evensong  
 Monday, Thursday and Friday 9.00 a.m. Morning Prayer  
 Thursdays 10.30 a.m. Said Eucharist

## The Junction

9.15 a.m. Junction in person at the OBH on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> January  
 9.15 a.m. Junction on Zoom on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January

## St Helen

Sundays 10.00 a.m. Holy Communion  
 Third Sunday 10.00 a.m. Morning Prayer  
 Tuesdays 9.00 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](mailto: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 Revd. Nick Parker or another priest if you need help in an emergency or any support (full contact details inside the back cover) or phone the Parish Office on 0121 705 5350. It is always a pleasure to talk to you."

## WEDDING AND BAPTISM ENQUIRIES

Please contact the Parish Office:

[life.events@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:life.events@solihullparish.org.uk)

0121 705 5350

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

# Contents

Editorial	2
Roundabout	4
Let us Pray	10
News from Team Churches	11
St Alphege	11
St Helen	20
St Michael	22
The Guardians of St Alphege	16
Music Matters	18
Church for Families	23-26
Youth Stuff	27
Pioneer Diary	28
Matters of Faith	42
For Your Diary	46
Address Book	48



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

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## Cover picture

*The Adoration of the Magi* from the St. Alban's Psalter, written at St. Alban's Abbey for Christina of Markyate c1123 – 1143, now at the Dombibliothek, Hildesheim.

# Headlines

<b>Raise a Glass to the Guild - And Hear About our Recent Adventure</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Blessing of the Crib in Mell Square</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Mystery Solved</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Journey to the Stable 2023</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Remembrance Sunday</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Pilgrimages and Holy Places</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Update from the Parish Wardens</b>	<b>36</b>

# Editorial

In his book 'Counterpoint', published in 1990, the priest and poet R. S. Thomas wrote a short poem reflecting on the meaning of the coming of the Magi. In his poem, R S Thomas suggests that there were four Wise Men, rather than the three figures of tradition. (Of course, Matthew, who is the only gospel writer to include the Magi, doesn't specify how many Magi there were. The famous number three refers only to the number of different gifts that the Magi bring for the child. It is just possible that there were two dozen wise men, who all brought the same three gifts, to the astonishment of the child's mother and father!)

The word 'Magi' means 'possessors of mysterious and secret knowledge'. These are not the kings we sing of in our Christmas carols; rather, they are students of ancient wisdom. Not only that, but the Magi come from outside the Jewish faith - they are not part of the people who were thought to be looking for God's promised Messiah.

The Magi would have had their own beliefs, and may even have been priests in the Zoroastrian religion. But whatever their faith tradition, it seems that they were open to the movement of the Divine wherever they could discern it.

So, from the outset, the Magi are mysterious and alien; they are different to anything we may have encountered before. In his modern poem, R S Thomas develops this idea in the methods of travel he gives to them:

*The first king was on horseback.  
The second a pillion rider.  
The third came by plane.*

However, it seems that the attention of the Christ-child is caught by the fourth wise figure who has arrived alone from a different direction:

*Where was the god-child?  
He was in the manger  
with the beasts, all looking  
the other way where the fourth  
was a slow dawning because  
wisdom must come on foot.*

The last of the magi to arrive, says the poet, has shunned the convenience of modern travel in order to truly absorb the experience of his journey. The gift he (or she) brings is the wisdom gained from patience and focus.

For you and I, the season of Epiphany could be an invitation to move at a slower speed in this new year, and to operate at a pace which seems more in tune with how our minds and bodies were designed to function. Perhaps we might travel, as the author Kosuke Koyama wrote, with the 'three-mile-an-hour God', so that we have the time to simply notice what God is doing in the world around us, and what God might be doing within us.

I wish you a blessed journey into this new year.

**Fr. Simon.**



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# Roundabout

## Raise a Glass to the Guild! And Hear about Our Recent Adventure!

Each year the St. Alphege Guild of Ringers has an annual dinner. It's really not quite as grand as that might imply, but we do love the opportunity to get together. We always invite a speaker to share some thoughts. This year after toasting the King, Malcolm (Tower Captain), welcomed our Rector designate and his wife Helen. We all loved meeting them both and getting to know them a little better. There was much hilarity as Malcolm told of his Google search results when looking for Fr. Nick's on-line history and that his lovely dog Mabel shares her name with a ringing software package! He then duly made his toast to our guests and visitors which Fr. Nick so kindly responded to. Nick told us of his recent trip to Lincoln Cathedral which was of real interest as he shared details of the tower tour he had and the Ringers Chapel; a dedicated chapel for use of ringers is very rare indeed. He also talked to us about the strong relationship he built with the ringers at Coleshill and how he hopes to get to know us as well. We loved his toast to the Guild:-



May your ropes never fray...  
May your sallys be comfortable...  
May your stays be strong...  
May your spiders be inanimate...  
May your clappers swing freely...  
May your chimes be timely...  
And may your bells ring true...

*(Don't quite understand all that? Well, you'll have to pop up and see us sometime and we can explain just how clever that toast was!)*

A week later we also had another of our adventures, this time a 'mini' trip to Burton on Trent where we rang at 3 of the churches in the town. We met at St. Chad's, a lovely ring of 8 if a little 'odd struck', which basically means that the bells don't strike at quite the moment that



we'd normally expect so this took some extra concentration to perfect the rhythm. Then we moved on to St. Paul's, a very large church with heavy bells. We understand that the industrious local brewers were out doing each other, building ever bigger churches with ever bigger bells! There were over 90 steps to climb to the ringing room and part of the route was over the roof of one of the aisles so just as well it wasn't raining! The bells rang as though they were even



# Roundabout

heavier than they really are, albeit that the tenor, (the largest bell) at 28 cwt. (3201 lb. or 1452 kg) is about a third as big again as ours! So, a tad heavy going as the bells had to be raised to the upright position ready for ringing which is hard work at the best of times! After all that we'd earned our lunch, so we went off to explore the town and find sustenance which for some, yes of course, included a local brew!

After lunch we headed to the market square and St. Modwen's. We had the chance of a stroll along the riverbanks as unfortunately the gentleman letting us in got stuck on a broken-down bus. But all was not lost as we were then let in by the organist who entertained the band with his playing until the keys to the ringing room arrived. A fun ring of 8 with the most colourful of ringing rooms. Blush pink carpets, and pink boxes for shorter ringers to stand on with mauve and pale pink walls. Not your usual ringing room décor but certainly bright and original. Then we took ourselves home, all looking forward to our full day out further afield in May.

Sand Cooper



**You're  
invited  
to Alpha.**

**For the  
explorers,  
open-minded,  
still thinking,  
curious.**



## Alpha Course

**The Date - Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

**Time - 7.30 p.m.**

**Where – St. Helen's Church, B91 2DA.**

For 4 Wednesdays before half term; then 4 after half term.

The course is for those curious about the Christian Faith and those wishing to spend some time refreshing their faith and wanting to move forward.

Attractive videos, followed by small groups to discuss what you have seen and other questions you may have.

To sign up or find out more, email  
Chris Carrington [carringtons.church@gmail.com](mailto:carringtons.church@gmail.com)  
Jenny Ladbrooke - [j.ladbrooke@outlook.com](mailto:j.ladbrooke@outlook.com)  
or ring Parish Office - 0121 705 5350

## **Blessing of the Crib in Mell Square**

Once again Churches Together in Central Solihull erected the Crib Scene in Mell Square where people can come and see the figures round the birth of Christ and can pray the prayer shown if they wish. On Sunday 26th November a joyful Blessing of the Crib Service was held, presided over by Fr. Dominic from St. Augustine's, Revd. Nick preached and there was a good crowd to watch and listen and sing carols. We are grateful to St. Augustine's for taking the lead in erecting and storing the Crib Scene.



## **Mystery Solved**

**R**eaders will recall that in the November edition of Parish News we asked if anyone had any information about a wooden gate, of which we showed a picture, which had been stored in the undercroft at the Oliver Bird Hall for at least twenty years. We now have an unexpectedly exciting answer. A wood expert came to St. Alphege, and this is gist of her verdict. The gate is a single, dark, oak gate with an asymmetrical curved top rail, the top of which is embellished with a carved rosette. There are two panels, the top panel being carved and having pierced acanthus leaves with mitred mouldings, the other panel being plain with mitred mouldings. There are two brass hinges, but also evidence of previous hinges having been filled in with new timber just above these. The carved panel and the brass hinges match the communion rail in the chancel and on closer inspection it was found that the gate previously hung at the top of the steps into the Chapel of St. Alphege, but was probably removed when a metal handrail was fitted up the steps. The brass hinges are more recent replacements for the original hinges. This gate is late Jacobean and part of the high-quality set commissioned for the chancel in the later Seventeenth Century.



## Journey to the Stable 2023

The Journey to the Stable event which is now in its eighteenth year at St. Alphege church took place during the week leading up to Advent Sunday. It was such a joy to welcome more than 350 children plus staff and parents from the following schools: Eversfield, Greswold, St. Augustine's, St. Alphege Preschool, St. Alphege Infants, Ruckleigh, Solihull, Oak Cottage and Yew Tree.

The session began with the children gathering in the pews to write their names and school on a star which were placed on a display board at the back of church. They then made a bookmark to take home to remind them of their visit. The children then moved forward to sit on the floor to listen to the Christmas story told using the Crib figures. They then divided into groups to journey around the church where they met a shepherd who told the story of an incredible night when he and his friends had been out on the hillside as usual caring for their sheep when they were astounded to be visited by angels telling them to go to Bethlehem. A Wise Man then joined the shepherd to tell the children about his long journey with his friends following a star and talked about the gifts they had chosen. The children also met a very grumpy Innkeeper's wife, who after being given some money to help



pay for her fuel bills, was persuaded to sit down to tell the children about all the visitors to her stable. The children then returned to gather around the crib figures, the manger was brought forward, and two children from each school were invited forward to be Mary and Joseph and share their story.



The children finished by enthusiastically sharing their thoughts on the most enjoyable part of the session, the part that was most important to them and why it was important and whether any part of the Christmas story could be left out and we would still have all the story we needed. It was wonderful to hear the children's thoughts and for each session the conclusion was that all parts of the story were important, and nothing could be taken away.

The Journey to the Stable would not be possible without the help and support of a team of wonderful volunteers who willingly give their time and many talents to make this event happen. A BIG THANK YOU to all of them (including Martha the dog who travelled with one of the wise men to participate in her first Journey to the Stable)!!

Linda Hicks



## Remembrance Sunday

Residents of Solihull and others came together to remember those who gave their lives fighting in the wars, principally of the Twentieth Century, on Remembrance Sunday. They attended the Annual Civic Remembrance Services, which were held at the War Memorial and in St. Alphege church on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November. The service at the War Memorial was taken by the Rector Designate, the Revd. Nick Parker, and the hymns were accompanied by the St. Alphege Choir and a brass band, protected from the rain, unlike other participants, by a large gazebo in the churchyard. Also in attendance were the Mayor and Council, representatives of the Royal British Legion, the West Midlands Police and other dignitaries as well children from many local schools, including St. Alphege. After the sounding of the Last Post, the laying of wreaths and the closing prayers and blessing, people moved into church for the main service, again taken by the Revd. Nick Parker. The preacher was the Mayor's Chaplain, the Revd. Geoff Lanham, Vicar of Knowle.



# ST ALPHEGE MOTHERS' UNION



## PANCAKE PARTY

**SATURDAY 10<sup>th</sup> February**  
in the Oliver Bird Hall  
5.00pm – 7.00pm

- Team races and special races for tiny tots
- Children's Tombola
- Pancakes to eat
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# Let us Pray

## Calendar and Prayer Intentions for January 2024

1	Naming & Circumcision of Jesus	The well-being of our town in 2024	Silverbirch Road
2	Basil the Great & Gregory of Nazianzus 379/389	Michael & Anne, our Bishops	Smiths Lane
3	Feria	Local doctors' surgeries	Solihull Bypass
4	Feria	Staff and patients of the Marie Curie hospice	Somerby Drive
5	Feria	The life and witness of churches in Solihull	Southey Close
6	The Epiphany	Those awaiting the birth of a child	Spilsbury Croft
7	The Baptism of Christ	Those preparing for baptism	St Alphege Close
8	Feria	Writers and poets	St Bernard's Road
9	Feria	Those caring for a family member who is ill	St Helen's Road
10	William Laud, Abp of Canterbury, 1645	The three churches of our parish	Station Approach
11	Mary Slessor, Missionary, 1915	Suzette Maguire, our Pioneer Minister	Station Road
12	Aelfred of Hexham, Abbot of Rievaulx 1167	Our Parish Wardens, Pam & Andrew	Stonebow Avenue
13	George Fox, Founder of the Society of Friends (the Quakers), 1691	The Quaker Meeting in Solihull	Stoneleigh Road
14	Second Sunday of Epiphany	The three churches of our parish	Stoneythorpe Close
15	Feria	The staff of the shops, cafes, bars and restaurants in our town	Stonor Park Road
16	Feria	The staff of funeral directors in our town	Streetsbrook Road
17	Antony of Egypt, Hermit, Abbot, 365	Spiritual directors and counsellors	Tanwood Close
18	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins	The Christian Churches in Solihull	The Crescent
19	Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, 1095	Diocesan staff & members of Bishop's Council	The Green
20	Richard Rolle of Hampole, Spiritual Writer, 1349	Members of religious communities	The Hermitage
21	Third Sunday of Epiphany	The UK Government	The Square
22	Vincent of Saragossa, Deacon, first Martyr of Spain, 304	Those who suffer for their faith in Christ	Thornby Avenue
23	Feria	Those who are seeking work	Thorngrove Avenue
24	Frances de Sales, Bp of Geneva, Teacher 1622	The staff and pupils of the St Alphege schools	Thornhill Road
25	The Conversion of Paul	Those awaiting the results of medical tests	Tibberton Close
26	Timothy and Titus, Companions of Paul	Nick, our Priest-in-charge & Rector-designate	Timmins Close
27	Feria	The work of Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness	Touchwood Hall Close
28	The Presentation of Christ in the Temple	Our Parish Children's & Families Team	Union Road
29	Feria	Chris Thomas, St Alphege Director of Music & the St Alphege Choirs	Upwey Avenue
30	Charles, King and Martyr, 1649	Our King, Charles III	Vulcan Road
31	John Bosco, Priest, Founder of the Salesian Teaching Order, 1888	Those who work to translate the Scriptures	Wadleys 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**

None

### **Funerals**

31 <sup>st</sup> October	Ron Crowdy
22 <sup>nd</sup> December	Beryl Harvey
18 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	Dora Mason

### **Interment of Ashes**

None

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

Margaret Aston	Lily May Hale	Joshua Panayiotu
Edwin Barnes	Betty Hartley	Roger Patey O.B.E.
John Barnsley	Dorothea Hobbs	Alison Peat
Tim Berry	Stan Jones	Hilda Mary Pinfold
Cecil Campkin	Nellie Kemp	Noreen Sheehy
Katherine Davis	Colin Leach	George Shirley
Robert Davis	Dorothy Lloyd	Dorothy Smith
Kathleen Dumigan	Jim Madeley	Michael Southworth
Maud Dunkley	Elsie Katherine Malpass	Margaret Tate
Mary Feldman	Norman John Marston	Peggy Turner
Elsie Flood	Ronald Metcalfe	Clive Thwaite Williams
John Flood	Elizabeth Newton	Betty Wood



**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>**

## 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.

Recitals for January and February are below. There is a break for the New Year. We are delighted that the first recital of 2024 will be given by Countertenor Tom Lilburn, who was Head Chorister at St. Alphege as a treble, was a Choral Scholar at St. John's College, Cambridge, a Lay Clerk at Truro Cathedral and now is now a Lay Clerk at St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, where he sang at the funerals of H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

**Isabel Baumber**

10 <sup>th</sup> January	Tom Lilburn (countertenor)
17 <sup>th</sup> January	Adem Parrish (piano)
24 <sup>th</sup> January	Angela Zienko (string duo)
31 <sup>st</sup> January	Jane and Peter Morris (flute & organ)
7 <sup>th</sup> February	Rela Spyrou (clarinet)
14 <sup>th</sup> February	David Rice (organ)
21 <sup>st</sup> February	Sebrina Stain (harp)
28 <sup>th</sup> February	Harry Brown (organ)

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## **Worship Notes January 2024**

Each year, Christians are invited to come together to pray for their unity in special ecumenical celebrations and prayer services. The event that highlights this special experience is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Traditionally the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is held between 18-25 January. This year, the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10.25-37) has been chosen as the focus for the Week. This is a story about crossing boundaries that calls our attention to the bonds that unite the whole human family.

The following reflection has been prepared for this year's event. It explores the thoughts of the lawyer to whom Jesus told his parable.

### **The Lawyer's Tale**

*I love God's Law.  
I dearly, dearly want to keep  
the Law.  
It's the foundation of my life  
and my eternity.  
But I want to know how,  
I want to do it right.  
That's why I asked  
who it is that I should love as myself.  
  
And he answered  
with a tale about a strange  
encounter,  
an encounter of strangers.  
And I will reflect  
about the one who showed mercy.  
And I bear the challenge  
to be like that one,  
to walk  
in the outlaw's shadow.*

It is interesting to note that Jesus answers the lawyer with another question: it is not "Who is my neighbour?", but "Who was a neighbour to the man in need?" This is the challenge of that parable today: to whom am I a neighbour?

There will be a service of Unity, to which we are all invited, at St. Augustine's Church at 5 p.m. on the evening of Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> January.

**Fr. Simon**

## January 2024 Services

### Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January

St. Michael's	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
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### Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
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### Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January – Epiphany 1

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Eucharist
Oliver Bird Hall	9.15 a.m.	The Junction
St. Helen	10.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Sung Eucharist
St. Michael	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Epiphany Carols

### Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January

St. Michael	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
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### Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
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### Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> January – Epiphany 2

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

Refreshment will follow the 11 a.m. Choral Eucharist

### Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January

St. Michael	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
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### Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
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**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> January – Epiphany 3**

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Eucharist
Oliver Bird Hall	9.15 a.m.	The Junction
St. Helen	10.00 a.m.	Morning Prayer
St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Sung Eucharist
St. Michael	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Augustine's, Station Road	5 p.m.	CTCS United Service

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January**

St. Michael	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
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**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January**

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
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**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January – Presentation of Christ**

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Eucharist
Zoom	9.15 a.m.	The Junction
St. Helen	10.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Sung Eucharist
St. Michael	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Evensong

**Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January**

St. Michael	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
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**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February**

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
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**Morning Prayer**

Morning Prayer is ordinarily said each weekday, and all are very welcome.

Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays at St. Alphege at 9 a.m.

Tuesdays at St. Helen's at 9 a.m.

Wednesdays at St. Michael's Chapel at 9.30 a.m.



## *The Guardians of St Alphege Parish Church*

**F**irstly, may I wish everyone a Happy New Year and I hope you all had a peaceful Christmas. As I write this, I am looking forward to our Christmas Coffee Morning which I hope will be well supported.

In the New Year we are hoping to have –

An Easter Coffee Morning,

Ann Taylor has offered to hold another Drinks & Nibbles Evening,

Lunch at the Drum & Monkey

And maybe an Afternoon Tea.

I hope that in my piece next month I will be able to announce that we have co-opted a new Trustee. However, will still need at least one more. We will also need at least one volunteer to help on the *Friends' Fundraising Committee*. Please give some thought to these matters and let us know if you feel you can help in any way.

Last year was a good year for new members and we are very grateful to all those who have joined. However, we must not sit on our laurels; new members are always welcome. The annual subscription is only £15 per person or £20 for a couple. You all know how much work had been done on St. Alphege Church recently, and that there is still more to do. So please consider helping us raise the necessary funds. Thank you.

**The Trustees**

### **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](mailto:OBHBookings@solihullparish.org.uk)



## Floodlighting

**T**he Guardians Floodlighting Scheme is available for anyone who would wish to celebrate or mark an occasion, or to commemorate a date.

**Unfortunately the floodlighting of St. Alphege is unable to be switched on at the present time due to corrosion of the electric cabling. This problem will be resolved as soon as possible. The commemorative dates will still be displayed on the notice boards and also in the Parish Magazine. If you have any questions or concerns please contact me on the telephone number below.**

The cost is £8.00 for 2 hours; £14.00 for 4 hours. Please give 14 days' notice.

Forms are available from the Guardians notice boards in St. Alphege Church or in the Oliver Bird Hall.

Names are displayed on monthly lists on these notice boards and also in the 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

## Commemorative Dates December 2023

1 <sup>st</sup> December	Cherished memory of Ben Fleet, devoted husband, father and grandfather on his Birthday, 1 <sup>st</sup> December.
4 <sup>th</sup> December	In loving memory of Michael Edwards.
6 <sup>th</sup> December	Myra Wilson. In memory of a loving mother.
7 <sup>th</sup> December	To commemorate the marriage on 7 <sup>th</sup> December 1985 of Wendy and Ted Corbridge.
8 <sup>th</sup> December	In ever loving memory of the late dearly loved Robert Lamble.
10 <sup>th</sup> December	Birthday memories of my dear husband Robbie Lamble.
14 <sup>th</sup> December	To commemorate the birthday of Marjorie Elsie Lane.
14 <sup>th</sup> December	In loving memory of Malcolm Spence.
14 <sup>th</sup> December	In loving memory of Mike Southworth on his birthday. A beloved husband, father and grandfather.
15 <sup>th</sup> December	In loving memory of Dr. Oswald.
19 <sup>th</sup> December	In loving memory of William James Lane.
23 <sup>rd</sup> December	In loving memory of Mike, deeply missed by Jan, Mark and Guy.
24 <sup>th</sup> December	In loving memory of Rachel Elston as this was her favourite time of year.
24 <sup>th</sup> December	In loving memory of Ronald McDonough.
27 <sup>th</sup> December	In loving memory of Gwen Mullis.
27 <sup>th</sup> December	In loving memory of Ron Soden.



# Music Matters

We've had a very busy November, following the *Beer Festival*, and running up to the season of *Advent*, which will soon make way for Christmas celebrations.

## Gloria – Autumn Concert

Saturday 11th November was our autumn concert, named *Gloria!* because one of the major elements of the programme was the ever-popular Vivaldi *Gloria*, which, combined with Wesley's famous choral anthem *Ascribe unto the Lord* formed the first half of the concert. There were some wonderful highlights, Lily and Thomas's duet *Laudamus Te*, all our junior choristers joining in with the opening and closing movements of *Gloria*, and the chamber



orchestra accompaniment to the Vivaldi, to name a few. The second half included Bainton's *And I saw a new heaven* to mark the fact it was the season of Remembrance. We concluded with Bach's Cantata 131 *Aus der Tiefe* which draws on Psalm 130 and the chorale *Herr Jesu Christ, du höchstes Gut*. Our tenors and basses featured prominently during the Bach, singing aria movements with a chorale juxtaposed above. Many thanks to all who enabled the concert and who supported the evening – singers, parents, audience members, orchestra members, David Rice who was our organist for the evening, and Chris for rehearsing and directing the concert.



## Royal School of Church Music Festival Service

We enjoyed a day trip to Birmingham Cathedral for the RSCM *Festival Service* on 25th November - seeing one of the city's snowdogs, browsing the market in Cathedral Square, and singing as part of a massed choir whilst also supporting our choristers who had successfully gained RSCM Bronze and Gold Awards. Congratulations to Lily, Thomas B. and



Thomas S. for their medal successes - these awards are well deserved for some of our most loyal choristers. Lily and Thomas B. gained their Gold Award (Thomas – commended) and Thomas S. gained his Bronze Award (highly commended). This service includes choirs from across the Birmingham Diocese and we were the only choir with Gold Award recipients. These challenging exams test choristers' liturgical and musical knowledge within a national Royal School of Church Music framework.

## Cathedral Music Trust

On *Advent Sunday*, we were delighted to welcome Giverny McAndry to the 10.30 a.m. Eucharist at St. Alphege. Giverny was representing the *Cathedral Music Trust* and formally presented a grant of £6,000 to fund a choral outreach project in four local junior schools. The project is known as *Rising Stars* and involves the creation of school choirs at Widney, TGPA Yew Tree, Sharmans Cross and Oak Cottage. The school choirs will join with our own choirs for three big events during the year starting with a *Carol Festival* in December. Giverny spoke eloquently about the need to nurture the British choral tradition and about the value of choral outreach. We are very appreciative of the support of the Trust and are enjoying these exciting collaborations with local schools.



We look forward to enhancing the worship at a variety of services over coming weeks, for *Advent* and *Christmas*, and also to bringing some Christmas music to the local community through carol singing in December. We wish all Parish News readers a happy and blessed Christmas.

**Isabel Baumber**

**A**s I write this Christmas is two weeks away, and we have just held a very successful carol service in the car park at St. Helen's church! There were a good number of people there and we celebrated the season by singing some well-known carols. We saw a comedy sketch with Roger, Simon and Chris. Roger's socks will go down in church history! There was mulled wine and mince pies to follow, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the occasion. This was a great example of Christian witness to the people in our neighbourhood, and some of our neighbours did indeed join us. It is safe to say that those who didn't join us will definitely have heard us singing out the joyful news that Jesus Christ came into the world as Saviour and King. As usual we thank our friends in the St. Michael's music group who led us so ably in the singing, and we thank Nick too for his talk. And Mabel the dog for simply being there and being so cute! And to Chris and his team of helpers, well done and thank you all.

Our Christmas Fayre this year raised over £2000 for various charities. And we thank Phil, Chris and everyone who worked so hard to make that the success that it was. From those who donated, those who were on the various tables, the caterers and everyone else, thank you so much.

By the time you read this we will have joined with our friends from St. Michael's at Sharmans Cross School for Christmas Day, and I am sure that that will have been a day of great joy and excitement.

And as you read this in January we will be approaching the season of Epiphany, as we remember the invitation to the Magi to come to the manger and worship, reminding us all that Christ came into the world for everyone, whoever and wherever they may be.

As the New Year begins, we at St. Helen's look forward to welcoming all who come to our door seeking the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world.

We wish all of our friends at St. Michael's and St. Alphege a Happy and Blessed New Year.

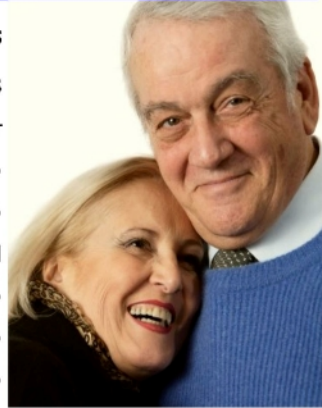
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Revd. Sue**

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### Advent

During Advent, leading up to Christmas, Fr. Simon led an Advent reflection in St. Michael's Chapel on a Thursday afternoon. This was a good opportunity to come apart from all the noise and bustle which surrounds Christmas these days, to reflect on the key themes of Hope, Joy, Love and Peace, all the themes that seemed to be pushed away from Christmas. This was an opportunity to bring to mind elements of those key themes to enable us to realise that these are still in the world, sometimes despite what the news media try to tell us.

Those participating found this a valuable and uplifting experience and sets us ready to welcome and receive the Christ Child once again.

### Epiphany

Entering January, in the Anglican and many other churches January 6<sup>th</sup> means the celebration of the Epiphany or as the Prayer Book puts it *The Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles*. It's an account of the big journey, of the Magi in their search to find the Christ Child, and of the Holy Family as they flee to Egypt. Epiphany heralds the start of a New Year for all of us. What will this year hold in store for us? What resolutions have we made that will probably be forgotten by the end of the month! What are our hopes and dreams for this New Year?

What personal journeys will we go on, whether physically, emotionally, or spiritually? How will we know when we have arrived, and perhaps even more importantly, what will we find when we get there? Whatever journey we may find ourselves on, God will be with us.

The Epiphany service on 7<sup>th</sup> January will be the first Sunday back at Sharmans Cross School after Christmas.

### Ron Crowdy

Late in 2023 very sadly Ron Crowdy died after a long struggle with health problems which eventually became just too much.

Ron and Linda were long standing and very loyal members of St. Michael's. Ron had been St. Michael's treasurer for many years and then managed to combine that with being parish treasurer. We all owe Ron a huge debt of gratitude for all the work he put in to ensure that the finances were kept in good order, in a parish of this size a herculean task which Ron managed with great professionalism. He became very knowledgeable on many facets of how Solihull Parish functioned and was able to offer good and sound advice across a wide range of issues. He managed to steer both St. Michael's and the Parish through patches of problems and difficulties which reflect the life of a big and busy parish. He was always able to offer sound advice and offer solutions to enable the Parish to safely navigate the more difficult times which came along from time to time.

We shall greatly miss Ron, and our thoughts and prayers are with Linda and their family.

Rest in Peace, Ron.

As we end one year and start a New Year, remember God is always with us, and a Happy and Blessed New Year to all.

**Paul Smith**





# CHURCH 4 FAMILIES

## January

### Sunday Worship

#### St Alphege

On 7th January the Junction will meet **IN PERSON** at 9.15am in the Oliver Bird Hall and will be joined by the **Solihull Parish Puppet team!** (An informal service for families of all ages. It's lively and laid back!)

On 14th January everyone will meet in the church building at 9.15am for **All age worship**

On 21st January the Junction will meet **IN PERSON** at 9.15am in the Oliver Bird Hall

On 28th January the Junction will meet **ON ZOOM**  
(Contact Linda [l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk) to register to receive the zoom link)

#### St Helen

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

**Sunday 28 January** St Helen's Sunday club will meet during the 10am service with an exciting action packed session for children age 0-11.

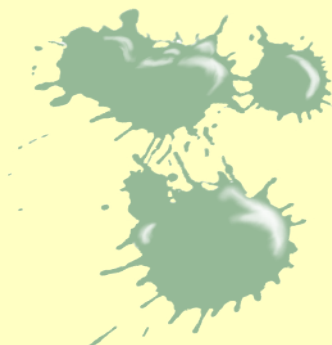
#### St Michael

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 19th January **Messy Church** St Helen's Church 4-6pm

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



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!



4.00pm - 6pm on Friday

19<sup>th</sup> January, 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 22<sup>nd</sup> March



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



# First Communion Preparation



At the heart of worship in the Solihull Parish is the celebration of the meal which Jesus and his disciples shared on the night before he died – the Last Supper. In this act of worship known as Holy Communion, Christians gather to hear the word of God and then share the bread and wine together. For several years the Solihull Parish has prepared children to receive Holy Communion (not the same as confirmation which is offered later) through a course of preparation which involves fun and interactive learning. They are then admitted to receive Holy Communion at a service known as *First Communion Sunday*.

As Holy Communion is so special the bishops have laid down strict guidelines which every parish must follow. These include the following:

1. Children must attend all sessions of the preparation course and worship in the Parish on each of the Sundays during the course.
2. Parents must ensure that the children worship regularly after their *First Communion Sunday* i.e. twice monthly as a minimum.
3. Before admission to Holy Communion each person must be baptized. However, if a child has not been baptized, but wishes to receive Holy Communion, they may begin the course on the understanding that they will be baptized before *First Communion Sunday*.

The dates for 2024 are as follows:

Liturgy of Welcome	9.15am	Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup> February	St Alphege Church
Preparation Session 1	2.30-3.30pm	Sunday, 25 <sup>th</sup> February	Room 1 OBH
Preparation Session 2	2.30-3.30pm	Sunday, 3 <sup>rd</sup> March	Room 1 OBH
Preparation Session 3	2.30-3.30pm	Sunday, 17 <sup>th</sup> March	Room 1 OBH
Preparation Session 4	2.30-3.30pm	Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> April	Room 1 OBH
Preparation Session 5	2.30-3.30pm	Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> April	Room 1 OBH
Preparation Session 6	2.30-3.30pm	Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup> April	Room 1 OBH
Rehearsal	2.30-3.30pm	Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> May	Room 1 OBH
First Communion Sunday	9.15am	Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> May	St Alphege Church

For further information or to register contact Linda Hicks

[l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk)



# Prams to Preschool -



## Praise and Play

Every Friday in the main Hall of the Oliver Bird Hall  
9.30am-10.30am.

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

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If you want to know more ring Linda on  
0121 270 7390  
or 07838 670772

or e mail [l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk)

## Youth Stuff

**S**olihull Parish Youth are delighted to have restarted youth sessions on a Friday evening. This church youth group is for Year 6 and above and runs each Friday from 5pm - 6.20pm in Room 6 at the Oliver Bird Hall. The sessions include pizza, activities and games. The aim is to provide a safe space where friendships and faith can grow, enjoying lots of fun at the same time.

There is no charge, but registering before you come along for the first time is essential.

Please email Lynn Smart for the registration link: [l.smart@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:l.smart@solihullparish.org.uk)

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## Stick the Kettle on...

**T**hose who know me well know that I'm a word person. I love words, and the origin of words. One of my favourite words is PAUSE. Pause is an early 15<sup>th</sup> Century word meaning "a delay, a temporary rest in singing or speaking" from the old French 'pausee' – "a pause or interruption" and directly from the Latin 'Pausa' – "a halt, stop, cessation". It also has links back to the Greek 'pauis' – "stopping, ceasing". Who are we to argue with what feels like the whole of human history!?

In the end, wherever it comes from, the beginning of a new year is a good time to pause – after the pause for Advent, the beginning of the Church year – and to reflect on the past year.

So, before we go any further, go and stick the kettle on – and see you back here in around 3 minutes +for a 'pause'.

### People (& Places) & Prayer

All the main blessings in my life and ministry are based around people, places and the 'connections' that grow. For instance:

When *Wellbeing Wednesday* reflected at a planning meeting that we were 'outgrowing' the Kitchen coffee shop, it was due to our positive relationships at the Greville Arms that we were able to approach them and move there in February 2023.

Also, in November when there was a degree of unrest in the local community due to circumstances happening around them, members of that same community came to me to ask, 'what can we be doing?' and we worked together on this. There were grave things happening in the community, but the blessing is that these people turned to **me** to help them look for a way ahead, because relationships of trust had been built. The importance of this in all our lives cannot be underestimated.

*What people (and places) has God blessed you with this year? Reflect, pray, and give thanks!*

### Actions

I am always looking for the next step – the next action that needs me in my Pioneer role – as well as gathering actions to repeat. The latter would include such as *Beer & Carols* at the Greville Arms, that ran in 2023 for the third year in a row.

Sometimes this looking for the next step means me seeking out help – thank you once again to those who have answered that call in 2023. We're all in this together and you are very much appreciated.

At other times this means using things like Advent and Lent to start a discussion over Advent/Lent breakfast. This year, after Lent and at the request of the group, we carried on as 'non-Lent' breakfasts. That was until one participant expressed that 'this group always gives us food for thought', and so non-Lent breakfasts became 'Food 4 Thought – breakfast

& chat'. After a break in November 2023, this recommenced in Advent 2023 and is planned into 2024.

*What actions are you involved in around your faith? What needs 'you' and your gifts? What could you resolve to get more involved in, in 2024?*

## Understanding

I give thanks for my line-manager, my pioneer coach, and others, all who help me gain understanding on what is happening in my Pioneer ministry.

For-instance, it was at a *Wellbeing Wednesday (WW)* planning meeting that I was told that I was doing my job too well! The reasoning was that people were coming to *WW*, connecting with others, gaining confidence, and then finding other things to do on a Wednesday morning. It's not all bad though, as smaller numbers make for deeper conversation.

*Who do you talk things through with? Is there anything that you are struggling to understand at present? Seek out someone you trust to talk to about it.*

## Struggles

I know, after 22 years of paid Christian ministry, that self-care is important. Self-care is not selfish: we practice self-care so that we then have the capacity to care for others. In fact, some believe that the level of self-care that we practice is indicative of how much we can then care for others, citing '*Love your neighbour as yourself.*' (Matthew 22:39) i.e. that is, you can only love your neighbour as much as you are able to love yourself. I remember being asked this when I went forward for Church Army selection, and that was the point they were making. However, there is sometimes a gulf between knowing and doing. I confess to you that my levels of self-care can be substandard, and it can be a constant struggle. I'd value your prayers about this. Thank you.

*What do you struggle with? What can others help you with and/or pray for you about? Be honest.*

## Extension

My original contract in the parish was for 5 years and, believe it or not – I'm not sure I can quite take it in! – I have already been with you all in Solihull parish for four years. However, the PCC have now extended my contract (that should have ended in November 2024) for another three years, to November 2027. This means that I can prioritise my work and further relationship building, looking to priorities that don't include job hunting just now. I look forward to sharing God's work with you over the next four years and, more specifically for the moment, in 2024.

*What might God be asking **you** to prioritise in the year ahead?*

Thank you for joining me for this pause. Why not make it a regular thing?

Keep safe and thanks for listening!

**Suzette**



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# Pilgrimages and Holy Places

## Iona

**This item originally appeared in the pewslip for 30<sup>th</sup> September 1979. One of those in the party, Keith Wilson, now a Deputy Warden at St. Michael's, has added his comments.**

"The Rector returned on Friday from a memorable pilgrimage to Iona, when he and a group of our young men from St. Alphege stayed in the Iona Community. Travelling by motorcaravan, they camped first at Bassenthwaite, then at Loch Lomond, then crossed by ferry from Oban to Craignuire, (when we passed close to NATO warships on exercise), through the desolate roads of Mull, (stopping to visit Duart Castle and meeting Lord and Lady McLean, the owners). Then another sharp short crossing from Fionnport, in a crowded boat, crossing over the boisterous Sound of Iona, its water a luminous green. In a sense, therefore, Iona and its first enchanting glimpse of the Abbey was already the climax to an adventure.

We packed a world of delight into our stay in the wonderfully restored Abbey, and the Community and other visitors from all over the world will long remain in our memory. High spots were the devising (and then conducting) by those of our party, of an evening service in the Abbey; a superb day's walk to the various holy sites on the island on a most beautiful day; and the astonishing amount of tangible history still to be seen in this lovely spot - where are buried 48 crowned Scottish Kings, 8 Kings of Norway, 4 of Ireland and 2 of France.

It was in 563 (when he was 42) that Columba gathered 12 men to go to Iona. This remarkable scholar, administrator and illuminator, set the mainland of Scotland alight with our faith until his death in 597, when he was buried in his Cathedral.

The tale of this Abbey unfolds, through the years of terrible Viking raids, its spoilation and its rebuilding by the Iona Community in our century.

Those of us who went on this remarkable pilgrimage to the cradle of our faith in Britain, were deeply impressed by the work sponsored by today's community. The permanent Staff made us very welcome, and though it is far from easy to secure places, we were assured that if we applied before mid-November, a Parish party on less modest lines would be welcomed next year. In the Rector's opinion, such a visit to this haven of peace would be a fine thing to do. Here surely is a Retreat and a Conference House par excellence in a Community humming with activity – with beaches and walking of almost forgotten beauty and peace.

Our party comprised, in addition to the Rector, David Miller, Keith Wilson (drivers), Steven Benton, Richard Bryan, Simon Cross, Nicholas Evans, Stephen Giles and Peter Newby."

-----

The author is not recorded but was probably the then Rector - the Revd. Raymond S. Wilkinson. A single motorcaravan was taken, which had been hired from a company based at Wootton Wawen. A second trip was proposed for the following year but did not materialise.

The above is merely an outline of the trip, but no doubt you are wondering how nine people survived in a motor caravan built to take five people. Very well actually, all things considered, although we had some adventures.

Two people slept in the cab over the driver's position, another two in the main bed, another in an overhead bunk; the two drivers slept in the front seats and the final two were spread out on the floor between the main bed and the kitchen units – cosy!

David Miller and I were detailed as the drivers, but when we went to collect the van, we found it had a damaged rear bumper. Important as the rear lights were hanging off. It was repaired, but meant the start was delayed. The Rector – a large and very imposing man – was not best pleased !

Most of the time there was a lot of convivial conversation, but there was dead silence between Penrith and Kendal. Why? Well, the fuel gauge was showing "low" – and Kendal was a lot further away than anticipated. So we resorted to switching the engine off on the downhill and back on again on the uphill. We eventually made it to a petrol station.

Leaving Bassenthwaite, we took the "pretty route", which was steep. At one point, everyone had to get out of the van, so that the van could get to the top of a very steep hill. Fortunately, they did not need to push.

At Iona, we were all involved in arranging a Eucharistic service, where the Rector wanted a traditional service, whereas the others wanted a more evangelical type of service. The Rector was not pleased, but a compromise was eventually agreed !

At one evening meal, two of the lads failed to turn up. It turned out no-one had seen them for a number of hours, so fearing an accident had occurred, search parties were sent out. What happened next? Well, the missing lads turned up at the Abbey, before the search parties got back ! The Rector was not pleased.

The Abbey was a wonderful place, being like a much larger and grander version of St. Alphege, where ancient Scottish Kings are buried, Celtic stone crosses marking their graves. This history was mixed with a lot of tales of raids by the Vikings, who considered any church as we might consider the local bank vaults, as places of money and wealth.

Suffice it to say we all had a good time, but perhaps the Rector found dealing with the younger generation less so.

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# Update from the Parish Wardens

A Happy New Year to you all. We trust you were refreshed through Advent and are rejoicing in the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ as we continue in the season of Epiphany, until Candlemas.

We want to thank everyone who put so much effort into Journey to the Stable, Carol Services, Events at the Greville, Christmas Services and Christingles, and much more. It all takes a lot of effort and preparation, for which we are very grateful. Many thanks, too, to the clergy, staff and deputy wardens for all that you did to make the services so enjoyable and run so smoothly.

The St. Helen's Christmas Fayre in November was a great success with many coming to browse the large number of good stalls, and it raised significant funds for the charities. A huge thank you to all the organisers. It was good to see a number of old friends and new people and we hope they will want to come to take a greater part in the church.

It has been exciting to restart Parish Youth on Friday evenings in Room 6 from 5 to 6.20pm. A number of Year 6 upwards in the choir are coming along with others from around the Parish.

Everyone is welcome and do get in touch with Lynn Smart if you would like to come.

Now it is on into the New Year and we look forward to completing the consideration of our *Parish Structure* so that we can recommend as a Parish and Parish Church Council what we would like this to be in the future. This will then go to the Diocese and on to the Church Commissioners for them to consider.

*Project Turnaround* for renewed mission and improvements to some church buildings is continuing. The P.C.C. has agreed to use a generous legacy and some of our funds to renew the lighting in St. Alphege Church which is so needed, and the P.C.C. now needs to consider reordering other parts of the St. Alphege Church Building. A donation has been gratefully received for the refacing of the St. Alphege Clock and this work will be done in the Spring.

We do owe a debt of gratitude to Phil Godfrey for the work he has done as Convenor of the Building Committee over the past 3 years and particularly for overseeing the work on St. Alphege Church Building and the Oliver Bird Hall. Thank you, Phil.

Our new Assistant Organist, Liam Condon, will be starting with us in early January. Welcome Liam.

The *Alpha Course* will be held on Wednesday evenings at St. Helen's Church starting on 17<sup>th</sup> January. Please do encourage and perhaps bring along people to take advantage of this opportunity for people to explore the Christian Faith and for some to refresh their faith.

Lastly, this is the time for New Year Resolutions. We wonder if any of you might determine to give an hour or so of your time each week or month as we are in urgent need of more volunteers. Please speak to us or to any of the Deputy Wardens about the opportunities available.

**Pam Price  
Andrew Williams  
December 2023**



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\*As rated by the Care Quality Commission in England and the Care Inspectorate in Scotland.

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## **A Prayer written by the late, much-loved Revd. John Bradford for the New Year**

### **In This New Year**

May we seek to look to God for hope and strength,  
May we seek to bond more closely with others of his household,  
May we seek to count our blessings daily in a spirit of thankfulness,  
May we seek to show Christ's light consistently in all we are and do,  
May we seek to sow good seeds of harmony, kindness and peace,  
by the grace of Christ, our Friend and Saviour.

*Amen*

**The Revd. John Bradford**

## **The Story of a Special Hymn**

George Matheson (1842-1906) was a well-known and highly-respected Scottish Presbyterian minister. He began to go blind when he was 17, and was totally blind from the age of 20. In spite of this, he continued his resolve to be ordained. He became a notable figure in the Church of Scotland, as a preacher, writer and scholar, and was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Queen Victoria invited him to preach at Balmoral, and subsequently had his sermon on the Old Testament Book of Job published.

Matheson is best known as the writer of this poignantly beautiful hymn:

O Love that wilt not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in thee;  
I give thee back the life I owe,  
That in thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be.

O Light that foll'west all my way,  
I yield my flick'ring torch to thee;  
My heart restores its borrowed ray,  
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day  
May brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,  
I cannot close my heart to thee;  
I trace the rainbow through the rain,  
And feel the promise is not vain,  
That morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head,  
I dare not ask to fly from thee;  
I lay in dust life's glory dead,  
And from the ground there blossoms red  
Life that shall endless be.



*Wikipedia* says that the hymn was written on the evening following his sister's wedding. The article continues:

"Years before, Matheson had been engaged, until his fiancée learned that he was going blind—that there was nothing the doctors could do—and she told him that she could not go through life with a blind man. He went blind while studying for the ministry, and his sister had been the one to care for him through the years. He was now 40, and his sister's marriage likely brought a fresh reminder of his own heartbreak. It was in the midst of this circumstance that Matheson penned this hymn.

Matheson himself wrote of the composition:

*"I am quite sure that the whole work was completed in five minutes, and equally sure that it never received at my hands any retouching or correction. I have no natural gift of rhythm. All the other verses I have ever written are manufactured articles; this came like a dayspring from on high."*

The hymn became deservedly popular during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and was included in literally hundreds of different hymn books. It is not in the hymn books traditionally associated with the Church of England, but you will discover it as number 384 in the New Anglican edition of *Hymns Old and New*. I have a special affinity with this hymn, because I found it open on the top of the papers on my father's desk shortly after he died in 1974.

## The Tune

The hymn has been sung to four or five different tunes, but the one that is most closely associated with it is *St Margaret*. I personally feel that this is the tune that best fits the words. It was composed by Albert L Peace, D. Mus. (1844-1912). Born in Huddersfield, Peace was the son of a warehouseman, and a gifted musician. As a child, he was largely self-taught, but sufficiently accomplished to be playing the organ for Holmfirth Parish Church at the age of 9. In later years, Holmfirth became more widely known through the TV series *Last of the Summer Wine*. Peace gained his Doctorate at Oxford in 1975. He was in great demand as a recitalist, playing in various venues including St. George's Hall in Liverpool, Canterbury Cathedral, Victoria Hall in Hanley, and Newcastle Cathedral.

**The Revd. Martin Tunncliffe**

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**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January** : 1.30pm in the OBH. *Life behind the Home Office door*  
- a talk by Rowena Nicholls.

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January** : 10.30am in church. *MU Corporate Eucharist*.

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February** : 1.30pm in the OBH. *My Life to Date* - a talk by Revd Nick.

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> February** : 5.00pm in the OBH. **PARISH PANCAKE PARTY**.

We can arrange lifts to these meetings.

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

**Subscriptions** are now due and need to be in by the end of March. This year the subscription remains at £29 (or £29.40 for cheques). We'll be collecting subscriptions at the next three meetings.

Cheques for £29.40 should be payable to **St Alphege Mothers' Union**.

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Direct Debit payment will continue for those who have already set one up but unfortunately new DDs cannot be accepted this year by MU Headquarters.

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

## WIVES' FELLOWSHIP

**T**he monthly Luch Club will meet on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> January at 12 noon. If you would like to join this friendly group for fellowship and food, please contact Carol Caldicott.

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## SOLIHULL PARISH PCC & DCC CONTACTS

<i>Parish Wardens</i>	<b>Andrew Williams</b> , <a href="mailto:arwilliams399@gmail.com">arwilliams399@gmail.com</a> <b>Pam Price</b> , <a href="mailto:colandpam@ic24.net">colandpam@ic24.net</a>	0121 705 3268 0121 704 3104
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<i>St Michael Deputy Wardens</i>	<b>Keith Wilson</b>	0121 778 2295

## SOLIHULL PARISH NEWS CONTACTS

<i>Editor</i>	<b>Carol Southworth</b> , <a href="mailto:parishnews@solihullparish.org.uk">parishnews@solihullparish.org.uk</a>	0121 705 4958
<i>Production</i>	<b>Roger Edwards</b> , 39 Westfield Close, Dorridge, B93 8DY	01564 739134
<i>Treasurer</i>	<b>Roger Giddings</b> , 70 Silhill Hall Road	0121 686 3422
<i>Postal Subscriptions</i>	<b>Helen Russell</b> , 30 De Moram Grove, B92 0PZ	07710 473 418
<i>Advertising Manager</i>	<b>Tim Drakeford</b> , 42 Fowgay Drive	0121 705 4494
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**CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE FEBRUARY EDITION OF THE PARISH NEWS MUST  
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Tel: 0121 705 9988 Email: [sales@solihull.prontaprint.com](mailto:sales@solihull.prontaprint.com)

**Business as usual!**  
following all safety guidelines  
of course

