

SOLIHULL PARISH NEWS



No. 572

NOVEMBER 2025

PRICE £1.00

TEAM CHURCHES

St ALPHEGE -

The Square, Solihull B91 3RH

St HELEN -

St Helen's Road, Solihull B91 2DA

St MICHAEL'S CHAPEL -

Bryanston Road, Solihull B91 1BS

Sunday Worship at Oak Cottage School,
Greswolde Road, Solihull, B91 1DY



St Alphege (Sundays)

8.00 a.m.	Said Eucharist	
10.30 a.m.	Sung Eucharist except:	
	Sunday 9.15 a.m.	All Age Eucharist in the church 9 th November
	Sunday 11.00 a.m.	Civic Service of Remembrance 9 th November
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 the Oliver Bird Hall on 2nd, 16th and 30th November

St Helen

Sundays	10.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
Third Sunday	10.00 a.m.	Morning Praise
Tuesdays	9.00 a.m.	Morning Prayer
Sunday	23 rd November	10:00 a.m. Junction and Sunday Club

St Michael, Oak Cottage School

Sundays	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist.
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St. Michael's Chapel

Wednesdays	9.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
Wednesdays	10.00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist

Friday

9.30 a.m. **Praise and Play** – childrensministry@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

The Revd. Nick Parker
The Revd. Simon Marshall

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

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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

*"In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row....."*

Photograph by Mike Southworth.

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Editorial

As I write this, early in October, out of the window I can see a large horse-chestnut tree. The leaves on this one tree have withered into a dull brown colour, the sky is overcast and it is raining. Autumn has returned. By the time you read this it will be November, the clocks will have returned to Greenwich Mean Time, the evenings will be getting longer and darker. Here in the northern hemisphere, November can feel as if the whole world is dying.

The Church's liturgy appears to reflect that natural cycle. Early in November the Church offers various service of remembrance for those who have died, beginning with All Saints' Day. On this day we honour the many faithful Christians who have followed the teaching of Jesus Christ during their earthly lives and who are now at rest. During the year a number of saints are recalled and paid tribute to by name. We know, however, that there are many more whose names and lives are long forgotten. It is these we give thanks for on All Saints' Day.

All Saints' is followed by All Souls' Day. This is a more reflective occasion. Our service is always held in the evening. We invite people who have been bereaved over the past couple of years or so, to join us in giving thanks for the lives of their loved ones who have died.

This service is organised in collaboration with The New Door. Following the death of a loved one, volunteers at The New Door make contact with the bereaved and offer a listening service. Many people have benefitted from this service which can give a much-needed opportunity to speak about friends and family members and to air deep feelings which have been held within.

In the second week of November the whole nation comes together to honour and remember the many men and women who gave their lives in the service of this nation during times of war. The Remembrance Day services particularly focus on the Two World Wars, but those who died in more recent conflicts are also remembered.

November, however, is not just about dying. The fourth Sunday in November is the last feast day of the liturgical year, the Feast of Christ the King. This is a relatively recent addition to the liturgical calendar. It was introduced in the 1920's during a time of growth of oppressive regimes, especially in Europe.

This feast was intended to highlight a different form of leadership shown to us by Jesus: a regime based on justice and truth guided by the twin values of love for God and love for neighbour. Directed by the Kingship of Jesus Christ, we will not be led astray by false ideologies. The liturgical year therefore ends, not with fireworks and *Auld Lang Syne*, but with the triumph of Jesus Christ over sin, oppression and death.

The Feast of Christ the King usually falls on the last Sunday in November, but this year November presents us with a fifth Sunday. So it is that the last Sunday in November 2025 is Advent Sunday, the first Sunday of the new liturgical year. So, after all our November thoughts around endings and loss, the month ends with new beginnings, new promises and new hope as we begin to prepare ourselves for the coming of our Lord and Saviour. The cycle begins afresh.

This November, pray for those who have died, pray for those who mourn, pray for those who walk beside the bereaved. Most of all, give thanks to God for the hope he gives us all in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Fr. Roy Murray

SHEPHERDSON COURT DAY CENTRE

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Telephone No: 0121 705 3356

Roundabout

St. Alphege Pre-School

As part of International Charity Week, the children from St. Alphege Preschool & Kids Clubs enthusiastically took on a sponsored assault course to raise funds for both the Pre-School and Birmingham Children's Hospital.

The children had a fantastic time climbing, crawling, and balancing their way around the course, cheered on by parents, carers, and staff. Their hard work and determination paid off, raising over £400 in total.



A member of staff said:

"The children were amazing and really embraced the challenge. We're so proud of their efforts and so grateful to everyone who supported and sponsored them."

The funds raised will go towards new resources and activities for the Pre-School, as well as supporting the important work of Birmingham Children's Hospital.

Ben Yates
Pre-School Chair

November – Season of Remembrance

We remember all who have died on the Feasts of All Saints and All Souls with Services in church (for details please the service list in this magazine and Worship Notes). On 11th November, Armistice Day, at the War Memorial, and then on Remembrance Sunday, 9th November this year, at the War Memorial and in church, we remember all those who have died in war. These photographs show the people at the Remembrance Sunday Service at the War Memorial last year, 2024.



Parish Christmas Cards

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 church, from the Parish Office or by contacting Fran Halstead (07710 329030, fran.halstead@gmail.com). The picture this year is a scene of St Alphege Church in the snow from a watercolour by George Busby. The packs are £5 for 10 cards. 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.



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).

Recitals are held weekly during term time and refreshments are available from 12.30 p.m.

Isabel Baumber

5 th November	Bernice Sammut Attard, piano
12 th November	Laurie McGee and Arthur Bocaneanu, violin and piano
19 th November	Chi Hang Ahang, piano
26 th November	No recital (Journey to the Stable in church)

Roundabout

James 2:17 – “Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”



November: The Month of ACTION

Dear Friends in Christ,

At SCAH (Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness), we know the incredible difference the church can make when faith moves into action. Over the years, your prayers, your giving, and your generosity have brought hope and dignity to countless people who otherwise would have gone without. For this, we are deeply thankful.

But once again, we need your help.

For the last three years, November has been our **Month of Action** – a time when churches, individuals, and groups unite to raise the vital funds that keep our work alive. And this year, more than ever, we are calling on our brothers and sisters in Christ to stand with us.

Why is this so urgent?

- **Rising costs:** The cost of living has hit everyone hard, and the cost of every starter pack we provide has risen to new heights.
- **More families in crisis:** More parents with children are now facing the threat of homelessness, which means bigger packs, more items, and greater need.
- **Refugee support:** We continue to help displaced families from Ukraine and those relocated to Solihull, ensuring no one is left without hope.
- **Depleted reserves:** Our reserves have been stretched to the limit. Without new revenue, we could only continue for 6–9 months.

SCAH's calling has always been simple yet powerful: **to help all those in need, in all its forms—not just the homeless.** As Christ himself welcomed the stranger, we too are called to open our hands and hearts.

How can you turn faith into action?

During November, our Month of Action, we invite you to make a gift of **at least £5** (or more if you feel led) to help us continue this vital mission.

Visit www.scah.org.uk

Go to the '**Fundraising and Donors**' page

Click on the '**CAF Donate**' button

Every gift, however small, helps us put faith into action—and changes lives right here in our community.

As an ecumenical Christian charity, SCAH does not judge. We simply help, in the name of Christ. With your support, we can continue to do just that.

Thank you for your love, your prayers, and your generosity. Together, let's make this November a month where faith truly comes alive in action.

With gratitude and hope,

SCAH Registered Charity No. 1058279



St Helen's Christmas Fayre

Sat 29th Nov 2025

11.00am - 2.00pm



Wood turning Cakes/
Preserves
Bottle & Chocolate Tombola
Books. Toys &
Games. Treasure Hunt
Raffle. Cards &
Decorations Crafts
Human Fruit Machine



Admission £1, kids free



All day refreshments

All proceeds will go
to Troop Aid & SCAH



Ringers Outing

So, it's been such a busy year for us with so many other things to tell you about that we haven't yet mentioned that we had an outing to Leicestershire earlier in the year! It was another successful trip, thank you to Gillian. We went off in a little coach, first stop Kegworth. We started the day crammed into a small coffee shop sharing seats and our breakfasts before tackling the rather awkward ladder to the ringing room at St. Andrew's. The bells rang as though they were somewhat heavier than they actually are and, a tad quiet making them hard to strike accurately between each other. But, we were off to a good start! As we were leaving, Robin was calling us over to look at his grandfather's name on the war memorial, which was lovely to see.



Next stop was Belton, a gorgeous little ring of six bells with a small ringing room with windows into the church, so whilst we couldn't all fit in together, we could all be seen when the next instruction came as to who was required to ring. This was a last-minute substitution as another tower had let us down. But, how kind that Val, who let us in and who had made the last minute arrangements for us, had baked and she had the kettle on ready too! What's not to love about chatting over tea, coffee and cakes while you wait?

We'd probably already eaten enough at this point though we were still ready for lunch at the Jolly Farmer. Quirky little place with a quaint and cosy atmosphere. The beer was good and we had free chips, tea and coffee! Before long, it was time to get to Shepshed. Now this was an interesting tower; firstly we had to tackle another ladder though at least this one had a few handles to help haul yourself through the trap door. We understand the tenor (the largest bell) has an unusually small wheel attached for its rope.



The View from the Tower

This meant that it was rather awkward to get going each time we rang. Some of us needed help to get started and lagged behind until someone came to the rescue! As we were all crammed into the ringing room, a friendly hand was never far away! Lovely clear sounding bells. This tower had a rather fun plaque held up by a stone head!



The weather had been fine and by the time we got to Oaks in Charnwood it was getting quite sunny and warm. Gillian usually comes up trumps with the sunshine and this was timed well for the team photo, in such a beautiful setting. We loved these bells which were a little difficult to strike evenly but they went well. So sad they don't any longer have their own regular band. Where we can, we do take a look around the churches and here were 6 lances from the Battle of Waterloo were a bit of a distraction just as we should have been getting back on the coach!



Finally, we were on our way to Whitwick. Goodness these bells were noisy as we waited on the stairs whilst others were ringing. There was nothing to be done, we simply all had to squash into the ringing room. The other side of the little wooden door all was well. To one side the tower had what was probably the clock weight cabinet running down one wall, much as a chimney breast might in your home. The treble, the smallest bell, numbered one and the second bell of the eight, were set back into the two alcoves that the cabinet created so when we rang the ringers of these bells couldn't see each other unless they peered behind a picture hanging on the wall between them, not ideal! What made this tower is that the kettle was on and tea and biscuits were once again well received!

Just up the road we called into the George and Dragon for dinner, with the most enormous portions, never mind fish and chips, anyone for whale and chips? A great day was had by all. We have several less experienced ringers in our band and it was notable how they coped with the unfamiliar bells, we're all certainly making progress and confidence levels were high. This had to have been the outing with the most tea and coffee stops ever!

And the social calendar continues. As I write we're about to have our annual dinner and this month (as you read) we have a mini outing to near Banbury. So, you'll be hearing from us again soon.

**Sand Cooper
Tower Secretary**

Let us Pray

Calendar and Prayer Intentions for November 2025

1	All Saints Day	Our Departed Family and Friends	Stonebow Avenue
2	All Souls Day	The Work of New Door Volunteers	Stoneleigh Road
3	Richard Hooker, Priest. 1600	Bishop Michael	Stoneythorpe Close
4	Feria	The Peace of the World	Stonor Park Road
5	Feria	The Work of Solihull Hospital	Streetsbrook Road
6	Feria	Healing and Wholeness	Tanwood Close
7	Willibrand of York, Bishop 739	Stephen, Archbishop of York	The Crescent
8	Saints & Martyrs of England	Those who face persecution for their faith today	The Green
9	Remembrance Sunday	Those Who Died in Wars	The Hermitage
10	Leo the Great, Bishop Rome 461	Dr Neil Shastri-Hurst: MP for Solihull West	The Square
11	Martin, Bishop of Tours 397	The Royal British Legion	Thornby Avenue
12	Feria	The Marie Curie Hospice, Solihull	Thorn Grove Avenue
13	Charles Simeon, Evangelical 1836	Bishop Sarah Mullaly, Archbishop Designate	Thornhill Road
14	Samuel Seabury, First Bishop of North America 1796	The Church in North America	Tibberton Close
15	Feria	Mission Aviation Fellowship UK	Timmins Close
16	Second Sunday before Advent	The Parish	Touchwood Hall Close
17	Hugh Bishop of Lincoln 1200	Members of Solihull Council	Union Road
18	Elizabeth of Hungary 1231	Homeless people as winter approaches	Upwey Avenue
19	Hilda, Abbess of Whitby 680	Vocations to the Religious Life	Vulcan Road
20	Edmund, King and Martyr 870	Solihull Branch of the Mothers' Union	Wadleys Road
21	Feria	Suzette, our Pioneer Minister	Walton Croft
22	Cecilia, Martyr at Rome 230	Our Choirs and Musicians	Warmley Close
23	Christ the King	The Parish	Warwick Grange
24	Feria	Bishop Esther	Warwick Road
25	Catherine of Alexandria 4th C.	Greater Understanding between Communities	Waverley Grove
26	Feria	Schools in the Parish	Welcombe Grove
27	Feria	H.M. The King and HM Queen Camilla	Wellington Grove
28	Feria	Archdeacon Phelim O'Hare	Westwood Grove
29	Feria	Saqib Bhatti: MP for Solihull East and Meriden	Wharf Lane
30	Advent	Our Observance of a Holy Advent	Wherretts Well Lane

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

From the St. Alphege Register

Baptisms

5th October

Madison Taylor
Nathaniel Beard

Weddings

4th October

Robert Steele and Charlotte Eaton

Renewal of Vows

None

Funerals

29th September

John Pedrick at Yardley Crematorium

6th October

Roger Loads at St Alphege Church

Interment of Ashes

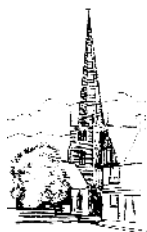
None

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

John Haselhurst
Alexander Herd
Peter Herd
Norman Jewers
Arthur Middleton
Lawrence Albert Patey
Gordon Ross
Rachel Scarff

Pat Sharrock
Leslie Starbuck
Joe Sterling
Dennis Tate
William Tew
Joan Watts
Frank Wright



S t A l p h e g e

Sunday 9th November

9.15 a.m. All Age Eucharist

Worship Notes November 2025

November is the final month in the Church's year and is often designated as Kingdom Season. Although not a separate season, like Epiphany or Lent, it is the final part of 'Ordinary Time' and has a focus on the coming Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

November also brings us a Principal Feast Day, several Festivals and Commemorations and one National Event. The month begins with the Principal Feast of All Saints' Day. On this day we celebrate the lives of the myriad number of saints, that great cloud of witnesses, who are not separately honoured by name. Our celebration of this day will be at our morning services on 2nd November.

All Saints' Day is immediately followed by All Souls' Day, or the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed. For many this is a much more personal occasion. At our Evening service on 2nd of November we will recall the lives of family and friends who have died as well as those whose funerals have been held through the parish in recent years. There will be an opportunity for departed loved ones to be mentioned by name and then to lay a lighted candle in their memory.

The Second Sunday in November is a National Commemoration in thanksgiving and remembrance of those who died in war, especially in the two World Wars. Following the outdoor service and laying of wreaths around the War Memorial, the service continues in church. There will be a separate services in all churches, including at St. Catherine's Church in Catherine de Barnes.

The fourth Sunday in November is the Feast Day of Christ the King. This day makes a fitting end to the liturgical year as we celebrate the triumphant reign and true kingship of Jesus Christ. This Feast, added to the liturgical Calendar about one hundred years ago, is held on the Sunday before Advent.

This year, November has five Sundays. As the month ends, we begin the new Liturgical Year on the first Sunday of Advent. Then we begin to focus our worship on the coming of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

Fr. Roy



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>



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Soldier**
Chilcott
Requiem

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Solihull School chapel

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November 2025 Services

Saturday 1st November – All Saints Day

St Alphege	6pm	Taizé
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Sunday 2nd November – All Souls

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Said 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.	New Door Commemoration Service

Wednesday 5th November

St. Michael	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
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Thursday 6th November

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist, Prayers for Healing & Anointing
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Sunday 9th November – Remembrance Sunday

St Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Said 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
The Square	10.45 a.m.	Observance of 2 minutes' silence
St. Alphege	11.00 a.m.	Civic Service of Remembrance
St Catherine	11.00 a.m.	Service of Remembrance
St. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Evensong

Tuesday 11th November

St Alphege	11.00 a.m.	Service of Remembrance
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Wednesday 12th November

St. Michael	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
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Thursday 13th November

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
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Sunday 16th November – 2nd Sunday Before Advent – Safeguarding Sunday

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Said 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. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Evensong, Prayers for Healing & Anointing

Wednesday 19th November

St. Michael	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
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Thursday 20th November

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
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Sunday 23rd November – Christ the King

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Said Eucharist
St. Helen	10.00 a.m.	Holy Communion & The Junction Sunday Club
St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Sung Eucharist
St. Michael	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Evensong

Wednesday 26th November

St. Michael	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
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Thursday 27th November

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
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Sunday 30th November – Advent 1

St Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Said Eucharist
OBH	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.	Advent Carol Service

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

On October 2nd we held our A.G.M. Rector Nick described the works to the tower that are imminent. It was agreed we also need to remain aware of potential issues with the fabric which may emerge over the years. Our treasurer submitted her report which indicated some growth in overall assets since 2024. It was noted that the history associated with our church could be more widely known. This will be reflected in plans for 2026. Possible trips to the historic homes of our past bishops - Worcester (Hartlebury Castle) and Lichfield, were mentioned. Other plans going forward are the final touches to the new website and the outreach membership to those with past links involving St. Alphege and Solihull. Rector Nick made clear his appreciation for the continued work of The Guardians.

In September Margaret Oswald kindly hosted a fundraising Autumn Coffee Morning. It was well attended and we were pleased to meet new members.

Future Events

Thursday 27th November *Guardians Christmas Lunch*

12 Noon at The Drum and Monkey, Four Ashes Road, Solihull.

Invitations to members are being sent out by Judith Hetherington. We look forward to seeing many members there.

Other News

On September 20th the Parish Church joined the national 'Heritage Open Days' which is supported by the National Trust. This was organised by Carol Southworth and Pam Price. Tours of the church, the tower and the windows were on offer and were appreciated by our visitors. Many commented on what a beautiful building we have. This has undoubtedly been enhanced by the new lighting. The Heritage Open Days website gives us free national publicity, so we hope to repeat this in 2026 (September 11th to 20th).

We have a new Archbishop, Sarah, a product of many years working for the National Health Service!

Roger Shinton
Trustee

rogershinton@outlook.com



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. Alternatively, you can contact Sheila Payne, details below.

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.

Do please contact me on the phone or email below if you don't know about the Floodlighting Scheme and would like to learn more. ***It's open to all.***

Sheila Payne

Scheme organiser:-

0121 706 0520

email: russellpayne110@aol.com

The Church was floodlit in October 2025 to remember the following:

2 nd October	In loving memory of Jonathan Mark.
7 th October	Royal Marine Ashley Hicks. Your love and laughter will live on in our hearts.
17 th October	Leonard Kidner. Remembering you on your birthday.
17 th October	In loving memory of my dear husband David Oakes on his birthday.
19 th October	In loving memory of Nicole Potts on her birthday.
23 rd October	In loving memory of my wife Alma Reah on this our wedding anniversary.
25 th October	Raymond Colston Horswill 02.02.1928 – 25.10.2008. Much loved by all who knew him. Devoted husband and father.
31 st October	In loving memory of Vivien Soden on her birthday.
31 st October	In loving memory of Nicola Blakeman.



As you'll see from the photos, this event, the first of its kind, was a tremendous success! People of all ages had been invited to join with members of the choir to sing for pleasure, sing for health, sing for God – but anyway, just sing!



Over 70 people joined together in the Oliver Bird Hall to sing songs from a range of countries and traditions ably accompanied by Kevin Gill. The repertoire included favourites such as Cwm Rhondda, the Ukrainian Kyrie, a Spanish-language Taizé chant, a popular Maltese song we learnt on our summer tour, and many more. Members of our local Hong Kong community led the singing of a Cantonese version of 'Give thanks', and Binoy Skaria led an interesting session on traditional Indian music and song.

Attendees had brought a wonderful spread of international dishes for the supper – Greek salad and moussaka, Caribbean curry, Ecuadorean potatoes, Hong Kong pineapple buns, Italian pasta, French and German cheese – to name but some of the dishes from this amazing feast!

The evening ended with some opera, oratorio and musical theatre choruses including the ever-popular Hallelujah Chorus from Messiah, and a rousing finale of 'Do you hear the people sing' from Les Misérables.

What a wonderful way to spend an evening – clearly some of our visitors thought so too: as they were leaving, we were asked for the date of the next one!

Many thanks to all who supported this event in every way.



Isabel Baumber



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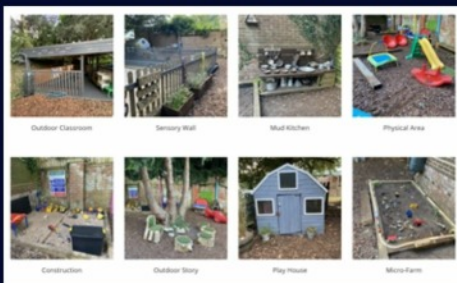
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CHURCH 4 FAMILIES

November

Sunday Worship

The Junction is a short family focussed service that meets on Sunday mornings. Here are the November themes:

November 2nd All Saints Day - At 9.15 a.m. in the OBH - Today we will discuss what are saints? Which ones do we know about? How can they help us and inspire us in our journey with God? Followed by a fun craft activity.

November 9th Remembrance Sunday - At 9.15 a.m. All age worship in St Alphege church.

November 16th - At 9.15 a.m. in the OBH Jesus Loves Children - As we celebrate International Children's Day, we'll hear the story of Jesus and the children. Followed by a fun craft activity to show that you are special and Jesus loves you.

November 23rd - At 10 a.m. at St Helens - Junction joins with St Helens Sunday Club.

November 30th Advent Sunday - at 9.15 a.m. in the OBH. Today is the first Sunday of Advent. Soon we will all open the first doors of our Advent calendars and this morning we will light the first of our Advent candles. The countdown has begun. We will be making an advent wreath.

Other Activities

Friday 21st November **Messy Church** St Helen's Church 4-6pm

Oasis Every Monday in term time 9.00 a.m. Room 5 Oliver Bird Hall

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



Facebook page

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Youth Stuff

The Youth Group meets on a Friday evening in the Oliver Bird Hall. Are you, or is someone you know, in Year 6 or above, interested in joining a church youth group? Then do consider joining Solihull Parish Youth on Friday evenings. 5 p.m. to 6.20 p.m. in Room 6. Sessions include pizza, activities and games. The aim is to provide a safe space to have fun and where faith and friendships can grow.

There is no charge, but registering before you come along for the first time is essential. Please email Lynn Smart for details and the registration link: l.smart@solihullparish.org.uk

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September saw regular activities such as Wednesday Lunches and the monthly Coffee and Cake Morning returning to St. Helen's after the Summer break. Our homegroups also resumed their usual meetings and at Lydia Group we were pleased to welcome two new members who we hope will enjoy studying and learning together. We extend a warm welcome to any other women who would like to join us. Lydia Group also joined with the Monday homegroup on 29th September for our usual social evening whenever there is a fifth Monday in the month. Over 25 people enjoyed a delicious meal cooked by Geoff Ridgway with a great selection of autumn puddings to follow. This is always a happy, convivial occasion helping us to get to know one another better

Another September highlight was the Harvest Songs of Praise to which neighbours and friends were invited. About 70 people braved the stormy weather to enjoy singing hymns, watching an amusing but thoughtful sketch and the excellent Parish Puppets and listening to the moving stories of three people sharing their faith journey and the importance to them of the hymn they had chosen. This was all followed by tea and cakes.

October will see the Church Harvest Festival on Sunday 12th and at the Morning Praise Service the following week we welcome Chris and Denise Arthey who have a very powerful story to tell of how their faith played a large part in their recovery from a horrendous road crash.

On 12th November we have a visit from the Archdeacon Phelim O'Hare who will preside and preach at our Remembrance Sunday Service. The end of the month will see Christmas approaching rapidly and St. Helen's Christmas Fayre is always a festive occasion. This year it is on Saturday 29th November from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. with all the usual stalls, delicious refreshments plus Father Christmas. Please support this event which raises money for local charities and invite your friends and neighbours. Also on a Christmas theme our Community Carol Service will be on 7th December. Again, an event to invite others to, to share much loved Christmas music.

Moira Wyatt

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60th Anniversary

Over sixty years ago a number of people from the new area round Oak Cottage had a vision. For some while they had been holding Sunday Schools (as they were known then) in their various homes, which had proved very successful. It was in 1958 that a Sunday School was held in Sharmans Cross School, which started the link between church and school which existed until recently.

The first service for what was to be known as St. Michael's was held on Palm Sunday 1965 in Sharmans Cross School. This was with the blessing of the then Rector, Canon Harry Hartley, and the Eucharist was presided over by Revd. Brian Lamb. Interestingly it seemed to have required permission from the P.C.C. before Palm Crosses were able to be blessed and distributed at the service.

So it was that on Sunday 28th September 2025 that St Michael's came together, not now at Sharmans Cross School, but at Oak Cottage School, to celebrate not only the foundation of St. Michael's Church, but to celebrate the festival of our patron saint, St. Michael. Sadly, we aren't the sort of numbers we enjoyed back in the sixties. However, we are still dedicated, still loyal, still praising God, and still celebrating the Eucharist, so some things haven't changed.



For this very special service we had our resident music group, and refreshments after the service. Wine was available, and we were delighted that Geraldine Burge had made a number of cakes to help the celebrations along. A number of friends also came to help us celebrate, so it was a joyous service. Susan and Jennifer had put together a display of St. Michael's over the

past sixty years which was available to peruse and reminisce over.

Sherwood had compiled a book showing the history of St. Michael's, mainly in pictures. All together there were many treasures to help us remember our short history and those who made it possible.

At the same time, we were able to celebrate that Fr. Simon and Sarah came to St. Michael's twenty years ago to the day, as Simon first celebrated the Eucharist on St. Michael's Day in 2005. To mark this occasion, we were able to present him



with a drum to add to his percussion collection, and a substantial cheque as a measure of our gratitude for his ministry among us.

Macmillan Coffee Morning.

For a good number of years, we have held a coffee morning in support of Macmillan Cancer Care. This year was no exception, and this was held in the chapel at Oak Cottage. We attracted a steady flow of people to join us for refreshments, a chat and to enjoy some of the many cakes available. Strange how often our celebrations seem to involve cake! Anyway, an enjoyable time was had, and we raised over £250 for the charity. Many thanks to Jennifer, who organised this, and those who provided the cakes and supported the event.

New Altar

Apart from the celebrations, St. Michael's Day was a good time to use our new altar, lectern and credence table. This was funded from a legacy left to us by a former member of St. Michael's. The old altar we were using was very heavy to move and now rather dated. The new furniture was hand crafted by a carpenter based in Worcester and designed to be modern, but with tradition. So, it came into play for the first time at this celebratory service.

Paul Smith



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Prayer Quarter

Every now and again I come across a quote that sticks with me. One of those happened year and years ago in the first church I attended (*it was to later become the church I was confirmed in; and later still the church I was married in; and later still the church I was first employed in as a Church Army evangelist - but I digress*). I had been putting Christian Aid envelopes through doors when, on the way home, I found a scrap piece of paper in the street with the following Abraham Lincoln quote on it:

*"I have been driven many times upon my knees
by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go."*

I have never forgotten that quote, or how I stumbled across it at an opportune time in my life. So why begin with this? Well, prayer is very much on my mind at the moment as, on 15th September 2025, a new prayer time called *Prayer Quarter* began at the Greville Arms on Cornyx Lane, Solihull. The idea for this time of prayer originally came out of wanting to pray for my husband, David, and all others who are sick and/or suffering in some way. Months later it began in recognition of the latter, plus it is increasingly clear that we are living in a world that desperately needs our prayers. So, how to begin.

In Luke 11, verse one, we read that one of the disciples says to Jesus - "*Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.*" Clearly, this need to pray – and the accompanying desire to learn how to pray - is not just our own: the disciples asked for it, and I have met countless people over the years who have been worried about not 'getting it right'. In fact, I once met a lady in her 90's who was absolutely convinced that she was no longer able to pray, as she had been taught – and believed all her 90+ years - that prayer had to be on your knees. Prayer, in actual fact, and in whatever position we prefer, is a heartfelt dialogue between us and our Heavenly Father. I would dare to add that if we can remember this, then it is very hard to get it 'wrong'. All of that being said, however, in recognition that many who come along to *Prayer Quarter* are beginners at praying, it is useful to have a framework for our prayers, and so we have a teaching method in place. I'll come back to that in a moment.

As you read this, *Prayer Quarter* will run from 10.15 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. on the Monday mornings when *Food 4 Thought* is scheduled for later (at 10.45 a.m.).

So, back to that teaching method. You may have met it before. During *Prayer Quarter* we use our hands as a reminder of what to pray for. That is:

Our **thumb** reminds us to always begin by praising God. So far we have begun in this vein by listening to a psalm or a portion of a psalm in praise of God. We have been learning about Psalms and their history along the way. (I politely declined the request for me to sing the psalm one week!)

Next, our **index finger** reminds us of things to be thankful for, pointing things out for us and, we have found, often reminding us of things that we take for granted.

Our **middle finger** - usually the tallest of our fingers - reminds us to ask for forgiveness for things we have done or left undone; said or left unsaid. We need a little more help with that one.

Our **ring finger** then reminds us of relationships and how we are called to pray for others. We have been using the prayer listings in the Parish magazine amongst other things, plus praying for those we know who are going through a tough time.

Finally, our **little finger** reminds us that it is OK to pray for ourselves.

Now the 'Quarter' in *Prayer Quarter* refers to the amount of time that we are praying. However, three weeks in and we're already finding that the 15 mins of prayer time flies by, plus there is only so much we can fit into that time. We may choose to extend our prayer time. In which case the 'Quarter' will come to mean the place in which we reside when we pray.

So, to end, I want to take us back to Abraham Lincoln and prayer: Lincoln remained steadfast in his faith even when General Robert E. Lee led his army of 76,000 men into Pennsylvania. Lincoln explained to a general wounded at Gettysburg: *"When everyone seemed panic-stricken...I went to my room...and got down on my knees before Almighty God and prayed...Soon a sweet comfort crept into my soul that God Almighty had taken the whole business into His own hands..."*

Amen to that!

Thanks for listening!

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Parish Strategic Vision

I am pleased to share that, following positive conversation with each district council, our Parochial Church Council has supported the principle of greater targeted investment aimed at securing growth. The vision is for a renewal of worship and ministry in each corner of our parish enabling us to missionally engage with those on the fringe of church with greater intention and effect. The strategy includes the revitalisation of St. Helen's, moving forward with the next phase of building work at St. Alphege (Project Turnaround), maximising the new opportunities presented by St. Michael's relocation to Oak Cottage Primary School, and continuing to build on the flourishing pioneer work in the former St. Francis district.

The most significant additional financial costs will be towards Project Turnaround Phase Two and a commitment to fund a new post of an ordained minister with proven ability in church planting and revitalisation that prioritises ministry to children, young people, and families. This would be full-time for 5 years and based at St. Helen's. The result will be that we spend our reserves more quickly but in ways that have real impact and by God's grace will leave a very positive legacy. We may count ourselves fortunate to have funds which enable us to move forward on all this with confidence but remain dependent on present and existing partnerships. Most importantly we need partnership with all our church members whose prayers and generous giving will be essential. We will also be working hand-in-hand with the central mission team at Church of England Birmingham (the diocese), working hard to develop missional partnerships with neighbouring CofE churches and parishes, and seeking grants and gifts from potential funders.

Having made this decision there is now much to do towards developing detailed costed plans. This will take time as it requires careful consultation and learning from good practice elsewhere. Please know it is our intention to be as transparent as possible and that we recognise the importance of ensuring that present congregational members continue to feel valued and supported.

In the meantime, we ask people to commit this to their prayers – that we would faithfully fulfil the Gospel imperative to 'proclaim the Good News afresh to this present generation.'

Revd. Nick Parker (Rector Designate)



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Church of England News November 2025

The Bishop of Kirkstall, Arun Arora, spoke at a gathering of UK Minority Ethnic clergy and ordinands in Methodist Central Hall in London on 1st October. The event was organised by the Church of England's Racial Justice Unit and attended by more than 150 people from across the country.

Bishop Arun said the Church of England's role was not only to "unashamedly and unapologetically" speak against racist violence and abuse aimed at minority communities but to help facilitate listening and conversation between opposing groups.

The conference also heard from Bishop Rosemarie Mallett, Bishop of Croydon, joint lead bishop for racial justice. Bishop Rosemarie spoke of the importance of Black History Month, which takes place each October, and of the opportunity of churches to mark this event. She said, "At every level, we are calling on the people of God, to see Christ in each other, and to live and work to build a kingdom of mercy, justice and peace, where all feel they belong."

The Revd. Guy Hewitt, Director of Racial Justice for the Church of England, spoke against the misuse of Christian symbols of 'faith, love, unity and justice' to promote division. And he urged the Church of England to 'embrace' St. George's Day next year and 'celebrate a positive patriotism' rooted in Gospel values and the love of God for all.

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, presided at a Eucharist service marking the end of the conference. In his address he said, "Sisters and brothers, each one of us is known. Each one of us is beautifully and fearfully made. Each one of us bears the image of Christ, and we belong to each other. And therefore one of the ways in which we acknowledge God... is by acknowledging Christ in each other, and acknowledging the sacredness and beauty of every human life."

Fr. Simon

This news item is taken from the Church of England website. To read the article in full, go to: <https://tinyurl.com/ukmeconf>

To read the full text of Bishop Arun's speech, go to: <https://tinyurl.com/bishoparun>

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Update from the Parish Wardens

When we last wrote, we were looking forward to St. Alphege Church being open for Heritage Day. We had a good number of visitors who enjoyed tours of the church and the tower, admired the windows and appreciated drinks and cake. The celebration of the 60th Anniversary of St. Michael's and Simon's 20th Anniversary of being their priest was a joyous occasion. After a lovely service, there were presentations and three beautiful cakes to enjoy. By the time you read this we will have had the Deanery Confirmation Service with Bishop Esther with around 10 candidates being confirmed. As ever, we welcomed all the candidates afterwards with cake! Many thanks to everyone who volunteered and helped in any way with all of these occasions.

November is the time for Remembrance – All Saints, All Souls and Remembrance of those who have died or been damaged by war. It is a time when people do look to the church to help them through their grief and general remembering of their loved ones or people that mean much to them.

Then the end of the month sees the start of Advent. The blessing of the town's Christmas Crib in Mell Square will be at 3 p.m. on Advent Sunday 30th November, with our usual Advent Carol Service in St. Alphege at 5 p.m.

The Guardians have recently had their Annual General Meeting and we are thankful that the new trustees are in place and for the continuing and new events that are taking place which are encouraging interest in St. Alphege Church and also bringing in new funds. Thank you. It is very good to know that funds are available for repairs to the church. We are faced with significant work to be carried out to stem water leaks from the spire and tower.

As mentioned previously, we are starting to look at a Strategy for the Parish for the next few years which will have been shared when you read this and there are some challenging possibilities that lie before us in order to help our congregations and groups to be attractive for people to help them come to faith and join our fellowships. Please do make yourselves aware of the outline strategy and let us know your views on how our Parish should develop in the coming years. We are seeking to put in place structures that will last for the longer term too.

Details of our Weekend Away at Launde Abbey, with booking forms, will be available soon. We are looking to this to be a great opportunity to spend time with each other for worship, refreshment, thinking and praying. Please do book the dates – Friday 5th to Sunday 7th June 2026. We are also planning an Away Day for Families – probably at the end of June 2026 – look out for details and booking forms for this too.

Work is still continuing on our Safeguarding Review, and the Worship Review. More information on all these will follow.

**Pam Price
Andrew Williams
October 2025**



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Matters of Faith

Footprints

The popular poem *Footprints* (sometimes called 'Footprints in the sand') has been claimed by several authors over the years, but the argument over its authorship pales into insignificance when one looks at the meaning of the words on the page.

In short, this is the story of a person reflecting on their life and seeing two sets of footprints in the sand – one belonging to them, and one belonging to God.

During the hard times in life when the person sees only one set of footprints, they question God asking, *"Why did you leave me when I needed you most?"*

To which God replies, *"My precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints in the sand, it was then that I carried you."*

While the poem itself does not come directly from a Bible verse, it takes inspiration from multiple passages about God carrying His people through hard times. Here are some of those verses:

Psalm 55:22 – *Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you;
he will never let the righteous be shaken.*

God wants us to give our burdens to him, but often we continue to bear them ourselves even when we say we are trusting in him. Trust the same strength that sustains you to carry your cares also.

Deuteronomy 31: 6,8 – *Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you -
The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.*

We become content when we realise God's sufficiency for our needs.

Psalm 22: 9-11 –

Yet you brought me out of the womb;

you made me trust in you, even at my mother's breast.

10 From birth I was cast on you; from my mother's womb you have been my God.

11 Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

God's loving concern does not begin on the day we are born and conclude on the day we die. It reaches back to those days before we were born and reaches ahead along the unending path of eternity. Our only sure help comes from a God whose concern for us reaches beyond our earthly existence. How can anyone reject such love?

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 – *8 We are hard pressed on every side but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted but not abandoned; struck down but not destroyed.*

Paul reminds us that though we may think we are at the end of the rope, we are never at the end of hope.

Isaiah 41:10 – *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

We need not fear because (1) God is with us, (2) God has established a relationship with us, and (3) God gives us assurance of his strength, help, and victory over sin and death.

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Thanks for listening!

Suzette

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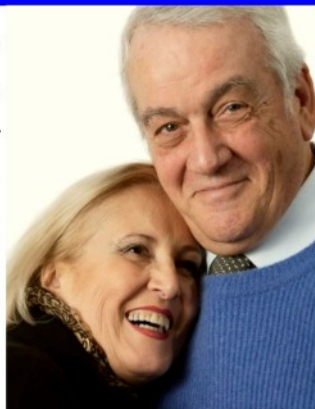
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For Your Diary

- Thursday 6th November** : 1.30 p.m. in the OBH. *Souls of our Shoes.*
- a talk by Elaine Diskin.
- Thursday 20th November** : 10.30 a.m. in church - *MU Corporate Eucharist.*
- Thursday 4th December** : 1.00 p.m. in the OBH. *Advent Lunch and Christmas Music.*
- contact Elaine Diskin (elainediskin@hotmail.co.uk 705 3265) if you want to come.
- Thursday 18th December** : 10.30 a.m. in church - *MU Corporate Eucharist.*

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

WIVES' FELLOWSHIP

This friendly, monthly Lunch Club will meet on Friday, 7th November, at 12 noon. If you would like to find out more or join this group for fellowship, good company and a good meal please telephone Carol Caldicott on the number below.

Carol Caldicott
0121 705 3168

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

NOTE FOR ADVERTISERS AND POTENTIAL ADVERTISERS

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

**CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE DECEMBER EDITION OF THE PARISH NEWS MUST
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mail to parishnews@solihullparish.org.uk or leave in the Parish Office

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SOLIHULL PARISH SAFEGUARDING

<i>Safeguarding Coordinator</i>	Vacancy - interim co-ordinator Pam Price, colandpam@ic24.net	0121 704 3104
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SOLIHULL PARISH CONTACTS

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<i>St Alphege Deputy Warden</i>	Sheila Sayers, 636 Streetsbrook Road	0121 705 5331
<i>St Alphege Stewardship Recorder</i>	Frank Upton, 1 Rectory Road	0121 705 2963
<i>St Helen Deputy Warden</i>	Chris Carrington carringtons.church@gmail.co	0121 705 0902
<i>St Helen Hall Bookings</i>	Jeremy Eade, solomere@aol.com	0121 706 3831
<i>St Michael Warden</i>	Keith Wilson akeithwilson@hotmail.co.uk	0121 778 2295
<i>PCC Secretary</i>	Julia Hanson, pccsecretary@solihullparish.org.uk	
<i>PCC Treasurer</i>	Martin Finch, pcctreasurer@solihullparish.org.uk	
<i>Parish Electoral Roll Officer</i>	Stephen Linstead, 20 Silhill Hall Road	0121 705 1376

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OLIVER BIRD HALL

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Oliver Bird Hall Bookings		OBHbookings@solihullparish.org.uk
Life Events (Baptism, Wedding, Funeral)		life.events@solihullparish.org.uk
Pewslip items (by 10 a.m. Wednesday)		Pewslip@solihullparish.org.uk

SOLIHULL PARISH STAFF & CONTACTS

Priest in Charge, Rector Designate	The Revd. Nick Parker Not available on Mondays	rector@solihullparish.org.uk 07890 720240
Associate Priest for St. Michael (Not available Thursdays)	The Revd. Simon Marshall	simon@solihullparish.org.uk 07514373 400
Pioneer Minister (Not available Thursdays)	Suzette Maguire 10 Middlewood Close, Solihull, B91 2TY	s.maguire@solihullparish.org.uk 0121 709 0884
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Honorary Assistant Priests	The Revd. Anne Haselhurst The Revd. Roger Chamberlain The Revd. Sue Chandler The Revd. Roy Murray	annehaselhurst@talktalk.net revrog@hotmail.co.uk s.chandler@solihullparish.org.uk 07970 791288 fatherroy47@gmail.com 0121 714 5216
Priestly Assistance is also offered on occasion by	The Revd. Canon Andrew Hutchinson The Venerable Paul Taylor	fr.andrewhutchinson@btinternet.com pstaylor53@gmail.com 07796 691203
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