

SOLIHULL
PARISH



NEWS

Easter Sunday

**Christ
is Risen**



No. 577

APRIL 2026

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
 9.30 a.m. and 11.00 a.m. Sung Eucharist except:
 Sunday 5th April 9.30 a.m. All Age Holy Communion in the church
 Sunday 5th April 11.00 a.m. Choral Eucharist
 8.00 p.m. Sunday 5th April Compline
 5.00 p.m. Sunday 19th April Taize service
 5.00 p.m. Sunday 26th April Evensong
 Monday, Thursday and Friday 9.00 a.m. Morning Prayer
 Thursdays 10.30 a.m. Said Eucharist

The Journey Service

9.30 a.m. In Church and the Oliver Bird Hall on 12th, 19th and 26th April

St Helen

Sundays 10.00 a.m. Holy Communion
 Third Sunday 10.00 a.m. Morning Praise
 Tuesdays 9.00 a.m. Morning Prayer

St Michael, Oak Cottage School

Sundays 10.30 a.m. Eucharist.

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

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THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

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www.solihullparish.org.uk

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

Cover picture

Easter Sunday – The day of Christ's Resurrection

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Editorial

It is a common practice to play jokes on people on the first day of April; April Fool's Day. Some of these jokes can be quite childish, others fairly sophisticated, requiring a bit of thought before you can understand the joke. Perhaps you will remember the famous 'Panorama' programme featuring the Italian spaghetti harvest! This year, the first of April falls the day before we begin the Triduum, the three days in which we walk with Jesus to the cross. This year Passover begins at sundown on Wednesday 1st April, which ties in nicely with Easter.

It all began with a meal. Jesus and his twelve disciples had assembled in an upstairs room. They had gathered together for the beginning of Passover. At this meal, Jesus ate with his disciples. At some point he passed them small morsels of food which he had dipped in some sort of dressing in a dish. At this same meal Jesus washed his disciples' feet. When Peter objected Jesus said there was no place for him in the kingdom of heaven unless he allowed Jesus to wash his feet. Then Jesus took bread and wine, gave thanks to God for them, blessed them and gave them to his disciples saying that these were his body and his blood and instructing them and us to repeat this for all time for the forgiveness of our sins.

There were twelve disciples present at what we now call the Last Supper. Twelve. Judas was there. Jesus knew already that Judas was about to betray him. And yet! Jesus fed Judas as well as the others. Jesus washed Judas' feet. Jesus ensured that Judas received the bread and wine. Judas was offered the same grace, the same love as the other disciples even though Jesus knew what was about to happen.

Then Jesus suggested to Judas that it was time for him to do what he had to do. Was Jesus being foolish. You might ask why he did not refuse Judas. You might ask why he did not keep Judas in that upper room. Within a matter of hours, Judas would betray Jesus. Jesus was arrested, tried, convicted, sentenced and finally crucified. At times are we not all a bit like Judas?

We know that quite soon after his act of disloyalty, Judas began to repent of his actions. He tried to return the thirty pieces of silver he had been paid for his betrayal. His actions played heavily on his conscience. So heavily that he could bear it no more and he hanged himself. He repented of his actions. Jesus calls us all to repent.

Foolish or not, perhaps it was Jesus who had the last laugh. Yes, he died on the cross and was buried in a tomb. Yet wonderfully, on the third day Jesus rose again from the dead. His death and resurrection bring hope and joy for all of us. Jesus died for all of us. His resurrection promises us all life that will never end.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul speaks of being a fool for Christ. He suggests that we should become a fool that we might grow wise. This April Fool's Day, and this Easter will you be a fool for Christ. Will you confess Jesus Christ, crucified, risen and ascended.

Fr. Roy

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Roundabout

Parish of Solihull Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2026

Our Parish Annual Meeting will take place at **7.30 p.m. on Tuesday 21st April in the main hall at The Oliver Bird Hall**. Anyone who is registered on the Parish Electoral Roll is welcome to attend the meeting. As well as reporting on all aspects of Parish life from the past year, voting will take place to elect officers, members of the Deanery Synod and lay representatives (direct and from district churches) to the Parochial Church Council.

If you are interested in becoming involved with the Parochial Church Council, please contact Julia Hanson at pccsecretary@solihullparish.org.uk for further details.

Project Turnaround Update April 2026

Project Turnaround aims to support our parish mission to the community by making our buildings more welcoming, hospitable, comfortable and flexible. Plans for Project Turnaround Phase 2, to undertake a comprehensive liturgical reordering of St. Alphege Church, were shared widely across the Parish and in Parish News (June and October 2024). The latest plans are available to download from the parish website.

Our architect has now covered off to their satisfaction all the detailed questions that had been raised by the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC). We await their Notification of Advice to the Diocesan Chancellor recommending approval of the proposed works. We will then post the Public Notice inside and outside church for 28 days, after which we can apply to the Chancellor for faculty (permission) to undertake the works.

Meanwhile we are embarking on developing fundraising plans whilst working up detailed designs to tender the works. The best guess is that, subject to approval and funding, the works could be undertaken after Easter in 2027.

Andy Halstead

Advertising in the Solihull Parish News

If you advertise here you will reach many hundreds of households in Solihull through the print edition and many more via the online version as well as supporting your church.

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TELEPHONE: 0121 705 4494

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St. Alphege Annual General Meeting 14th April 2026

The St. Alphege Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 14th April 2026 at 7.30 p.m. in the Oliver Bird Hall.

The A.G.M. is an important event in the life of the Church. It enables members of the congregation to ask questions, to learn about what has been happening over the past twelve months and what the plans are for the future. It is also the occasion when we elect officers to serve on the District Church Council (D.C.C.). This year the vacancies for election include the following posts: Deanery Synod (see below), five members of the D.C.C. for a three-year term and two nominees who will serve on the Parochial Church Council along with members from St. Helen's and St. Michael's. In addition, and very importantly, there are two vacancies for the post of Deputy Warden.

It is important to have representation from all St. Alphege congregations on the D.C.C. as matters discussed at the meetings can affect all aspects of our Church life. We also need a diverse D.C.C. with all ages and backgrounds included. Actions taken as a result of decisions decided on are most effective when every cohort of the church family is represented. Meetings are held every two months at 7 p.m. in the Oliver Bird Hall. Can you help our Mission and stand for election to ensure all views are taken into account?

To be eligible to stand for election you must have been on the St. Alphege section of the Electoral Roll for at least six months at the date of the A.G.M. and be proposed and seconded by persons who are also on the Roll. The forms for anyone wishing to stand for election should be completed and returned to either the Deputy Warden (Sheila Sayers) or the Parish Office. Details will be included on the pew slip from the end of February.

The Electoral Roll is a statutory document. To be entered on it you must have completed and returned a form obtainable from the Parish Office stating that you are baptised and that you either reside within the Parish or have been a regular attender at public worship within the parish for the previous six months. If you are in any doubt as to whether you are on the Electoral Roll or have any questions about the vacancies, please contact Sheila Sayers on 07507 683639.

Deanery Synod: In 2020 the new deanery of Solihull and Yardley was formed, bringing together the two existing deaneries and it is now a group of twenty-four parishes, stretching from St. Peter Balsall Common in the east to All Saints Small Heath in the west. This year the Deanery Synod is up for re-election and we are entitled to three members. The Synod meets on three evenings a year and recent agendas have included items on the financial and sustainability challenges facing the diocese, and the experiences of parishes working together. In addition there are occasional social events. If you are interested in becoming better informed about issues within the wider Church of England and having an opportunity to contribute to the debate, then please consider offering to be one of our parish reps. The elections will take place at the D.C.C. A.G.M. If you would like more information about being on the Deanery Synod, please speak to Deirdre Moll on 0121 705 3271 d.moll@usa.net

A warm invitation to the A.G.M. is extended to all members of the congregation.

Peter Haselhurst



Churches
Together in
Central Solihull

Walk of Witness

**Good Friday
3rd April 2026**

Please join us from 11am outside **St Augustine's Church**,
1 Herbert Rd, Solihull B91 3QE.

The Walk of Witness will follow a route along Station Road and High Street to Mell Square. We encourage people to join our short acts of worship especially in Mell Square. Please join us on the way if you cannot come to the start.

This is the main opportunity each year for an open act of worship from people in the churches in Central Solihull, to give witness to our Lord's Crucifixion and Glorious Resurrection.

The Walk of Witness should finish by 12.15pm at the corner of Drury Lane and High Street and will be followed by **Coffee and Hot Cross Buns in the Oliver Bird Hall** nearby in Church Hill Road, to which everyone is invited.

www.centralsolihullchurches.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).

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

Isabel Baumber

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 st April | No recital - Holy Week and Easter |
| 8 th April | No recital - Holy Week and Easter |
| 15 th April | Christopher Churcher, baritone |
| 22 nd April | Performer TBC |
| 29 th April | George Moloney, organ |

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/>

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OBHBookings@solihullparish.org.uk

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Bellringers News

Let's talk about Keith

Keith is a long-standing member of our band and has for some years looked after our quarter peals and workshops. But there's way more to Keith's activities on our behalf, than you might first think! You'll have come across him before in these pages. He very kindly writes a few articles for us, and I've written about him before, including how he came to ringing through his wife Linda. She pestered Keith to learn, knowing how much he'd enjoy it. Finally in 1996, having resisted until they came to Solihull, he took the plunge and simply hasn't looked back. He's a keen archivist and passionate about helping to develop change ringing skills.

So where to start?

You'll recall that a quarter peal takes about 45 minutes of complete concentration to achieve. We work as a team to maintain rhythm and accuracy as we go along. We dedicate them to important events in your lives and ours and even sometimes include a frivolous footnote! We also use quarter peals to cement ringers' learning and in many cases they act as milestones along the way. Keith makes the arrangements for us, checking availability and working with our Tower Captain to decide what we will ring and who needs a new opportunity. More than this, Keith has also been researching past ringing at Solihull and ensuring the records held on the bell ringers' national data base, BellBoard, are up to date.

Keith has really enjoyed looking into early ringing which has led him to explore our Guild's records, those held at the Warwick archives and even records held by one of our most prominent local ringing families. The work has had parallel paths, a general interest in historic ringing and a fascination for The Bragg family. Their names are on many of the boards recording peals in our ringing room, ringing that lasts over three hours. He came across a quarter peal rung by ten members of the Bragg family which piqued his interest. He's written in this magazine about some of his research but, working with Gordon Bragg who holds much of the family's personal archive, he's researched their family tree and found about 20 ringers connected to them. Gordon also lent Keith a copy of the parish accounts dating back to the 1600's which was helpful to the other stream of research. Subsequently, Keith has registered one of the oldest national ringing records going back to 1657, having found a payment to the band for the annual commemoration of the Gunpowder Plot some 50 years earlier! Other records for both peals and quarter peals have come from our Guild's peal books, which include beautifully illustrated pages and, the ringing records of past ringers. Whilst there has been a little reshuffling of numbers as Keith has discovered more performances, as far as we can tell, we do now believe that all known peals and quarter peals are recorded on BellBoard. St. Alphege is one of the few towers in the country that have achieved this.

More recently Keith has engaged with the Guardians who are keen to share the history of our church including the activities of the ringers and our tower. He's spoken at events in the past and undertaken tower tours. The next occasion where he's involved is the celebration for the St. Alphege Patronal Festival. On 18th April he'll be talking about the story of our bells, the earliest references being 1532. Keep an eye out for the adverts that will appear for the series of talks and displays that are being planned. Where we can, we have also supported Heritage Day tours which allow members of the public the opportunity to explore behind those usually closed doors.



The View from the Tower

We can't easily recall how long Keith has been running workshops of one type or another. They've evolved over time, not least to give variety. Ringers often fall back on routine methods, that's the patterns in changes that we learn and ring. These are universally known methods that allow us to easily join in at towers across the country and the world. However, we like to stretch ourselves and provide challenges not just to the less experienced members of the band but to those that have been ringing many years. We often say that, if you choose, ringing can be a pastime where you never stop learning. So, this has had Keith exploring all sorts of methods to expand our knowledge and have us pushing the boundaries of what is possible. We've all achieved so much and most recently he's added in some focused slots for those newer to their ringing journeys. All workshops come with the welcome relief of refreshments halfway through and an opportunity to catch up socially.

Another key role that Keith has taken on is to maintain the simulator. Having seen one in action elsewhere he enlisted the help of a ringer from Knowle to install one here. He donated a laptop for the ringing room and linked the software to the light beams that shine onto reflective strips attached to the bell's wheels which then generates the sound downstairs. We silence the clappers to prevent the bells from sounding outside. Not all our bells can be included in the scheme but where fitted they have really helped those learning to ring, allowing them to appreciate the delay between their pull and the sound of the bell, without our neighbours listening to those early attempts. We're now exploring the system further to improve our striking, this is the rhythm that we aim for, equally placing bells in the sequences we ring. The software can provide us with data detailing our accuracy, or otherwise!

Whilst it may seem that Keith is obsessed with all things ringing, somehow he fits in many other interests. In particular, he is a keen runner and cyclist, he's even won a European bronze medal for Great Briton in duathlon! Thank you Keith for all you do for us, your tenacity with our history and data and all that you do quietly behind the scenes.

A few quickfire questions to end on...

A bell rope that is just long enough for ringing, or a good foot or so in hand?

A good foot or so please! Keith is 6 feet 2 inches so he's always had the comfort of plenty of rope unlike those of around 4 feet who have to stand on boxes!

Bell ringing or running?

Both. Though, Keith acknowledges that he'll be ringing long after taking part in his last race!

How many BellBoard records have you updated?

Something like a 1000. New entries and edits, in some cases adding first names to those already recorded, just for clarity.

Quarter peal or peal?

Quarter peal.

Tower tours and sharing knowledge or research?

He loves both, you can't do one without the other.

And your favourite bell?

The blue one! We have bells in both D and D flat, identifying the latter with a blue coloured rope. It's usually rung as part of 8 bells together. He enjoys the weight of this bell and finds his striking easier when his note is somewhere in the middle of the octave.

Sand Cooper

Let us Pray

Calendar and Prayer Intentions for April 2026

| | | | |
|----|--|--|--------------------|
| 1 | Wednesday in Holy Week | That we may faithfully observe the Triduum this year | Eldersfield Grove |
| 2 | Maundy Thursday | All Bishops, Priests and Deacons | Elms Close |
| 3 | Good Friday | The Walk of Witness through Solihull Town Centre | Felton Grove |
| 4 | Holy Saturday | That the Light of Christ may shine in us all | Ferndown Road |
| 5 | Easter Day | A Joyful Celebration of the Resurrection | Fircroft |
| 6 | Monday in Easter Week | For those who must work on this Bank Holiday | Four Stones Close |
| 7 | Tuesday in Easter Week | Spiritual Directors | Froxmere Close |
| 8 | Wednesday in Easter Week | Those who are homeless | George Road |
| 9 | Thursday in Easter Week | Their Majesties, the King and Queen | Gilmorton Close |
| 10 | Friday in Easter Week | The Deanery of Yardley and Solihull | Glaston Drive |
| 11 | Saturday in Easter Week | Those who struggle financially | Glebe Road |
| 12 | Easter 2 | Solihull Parish: St. Michael's Church | Glenfield Close |
| 13 | Feria | For all schools in our parish | Grandborough Drive |
| 14 | Feria | Michael, Bishop of Birmingham | Grange Road |
| 15 | Feria | Those carrying heavy burdens in life | Greswolde Road |
| 16 | Isabella Gilmore Deaconess | The Mother's Union | Greyhurst Croft |
| 17 | Feria | The Prime Minister and Government of this Country | Grove Avenue |
| 18 | Feria | Esther, Bishop of Aston | Grove Road |
| 19 | Easter 3 | Solihull Parish: St. Helen's Church | Habberley Croft |
| 20 | Feria | Our Church Guides | Hainfield Drive |
| 21 | Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury | Sarah, Archbishop of Canterbury | Halford Road |
| 22 | Feria | Phelim, Archdeacon of Aston | Halstead Grove |
| 23 | George, Patron of England | Those standing for Election to Councils next month | Hampton Lane |
| 24 | Mellitus, Bishop of London | Theological Colleges | Hartwell Close |
| 25 | Mark the Evangelist | Readers and Licensed Lay Leaders in our Diocese | Haseley Road |
| 26 | Easter 4 | Solihull Parish: St. Alphege Church | Heath Gardens |
| 27 | Christina Rossetti, Poet | Those who enrich our worship though art and poetry | Heath Road |
| 28 | Peter Chanel, Missionary | Leaders of Uniformed Organisations | Heathcote Avenue |
| 29 | Catherine of Sienna | Those persecuted for their faith | Heaton Road |
| 30 | Pandita Mary Ramabai, Translator of Scriptures | Theologians and Spiritual Writers | Henley Crescent |

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

From the St. Alphege Register

Baptisms

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 22 nd February | Georgia Grace Allen |
| 1 st March | Barnaby Nathan Tunnicliffe |
| | Isabella Rose Crossman-Morgan |

Weddings

none

Renewal of Vows

None

Funerals

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 19 th February | Evelyn Jean Berry at Robin Hood Crematorium |
| 27 th February | Lois Marjorie Eason at Robin Hood Crematorium |
| 9 th March | Dr. Peter Ernest Bottomley at St. Helen's |
| 13 th March | David Arthur Caldicott at St. Alphege |
| | John Gareth Kemp at St. Alphege |
| 23 rd March | John Wragg at St. Alphege |
| 24 th March | Heather Clarke at Robin Hood Crematorium |
| 30 th March | Barbara Sears at St. Helen's |
| 14 th April | Reginald Clive Askey at St. Alphege |

Interment of Ashes

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 4 th March | Lois Eason |
| 10 th April | Olive Mary Lewis, nee: Matthews |
| | William Arthur Lewis |

Names taken from the Chantry Book for Remembrance in April

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| John Wallis | Mark Warrior | David William Wyldes |
| John Keyte | Bob Maw | Vivien Soden |
| Alasdair Geddes | Wilfred Gregory | Burmah Hall |
| Eileen Edwards | Eric Greasley | Arthur Owen Caldicott |
| Terence Butt | Margaret Stenhouse | Joyce Eyre |
| Mabel Florance | John Harrison | |
| Neville Freeth | Revd. Leslie Brotherton | |

Worship Notes for April

April begins on Wednesday, part way through our Holy Week preparations before the Triduum and the celebrations at Easter. As usual, we will observe these days in a variety of ways across our three churches.

Wednesday in Holy Week, 1st April

On this Wednesday, as on most Wednesdays, there will be a celebration of the Eucharist at St. Michael's Chapel at 10.00 a.m. This quiet, intimate space provides an ideal setting for the reflective mood which prevails through this week. In the evening, at 8.00 p.m. there will be a Taizé service at St. Alphege Church, again offering our worship through a more reflective style of music.

Maundy Thursday.

There are two events in the evening of Maundy Thursday. At St. Helen's Church at 6.00 p.m. there will be a service centred on an Agape Meal, a service which has echoes of the Last Supper. At St. Alphege at 8.00 p.m. there will be a celebration of the Eucharist which will include the reception of oils, blessed that day by our Bishop. As part of this service, we recall that Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. At the end of service, the sacrament is taken to the Garden of Repose in St. Anthony's Chapel and then the altars are stripped. We keep watch in Church until 10.00 p.m.

Good Friday

In St. Alphege this day begins with Morning Prayer and then at 9.45 a.m. there will be an all-age service with activities for everyone to join in. The sacrament is offered as part of this worship. At 11.00 a.m. the town centre Walk of Witness begins at St. Augustine's Church and processes along the High Street to Mell Square where there will be an act of worship. The walk then continues to St. Alphege for a final prayer before refreshments in the Oliver Bird Hall. Our final service at St. Alphege is at 2.00 p.m. This consists of Devotions at the Foot of the Cross. There is no celebration of the Eucharist, but we do receive the sacrament, reserved after Thursday's service. To end Good Friday there is an evening service of Tenebrae at 8.00 p.m. at St. Helen's Church.

Holy Saturday

This day begins at 9.30 a.m. with a quiet morning at St. Helen's Church led by Suzette Maguire. In the evening, at 8.00 p.m. there will be the Easter Vigil and Sung Eucharist. We begin in darkness as we light candles to celebrate the coming of the Light of Christ into the Church.

Easter Day

The day of the Resurrection dawns with an Easter Dawn Service at 6.30 a.m. at St. Michael's Chapel. At St. Alphege there will be a said Eucharist at 8.00 a.m., and All-Age service at 9.30 a.m. and a full Choral Eucharist at 11.00 a.m. There will also be eucharists held at 10.00 a.m. at St. Helen's and at 10.30 a.m. at St. Michael's. There will be no Evensong, but the day will end with Compline at 8.00 p.m.

May we all be blessed this Easter.



LAUNDE ABBEY WEEKEND AWAY

5th to 7th June 2026
Friday evening to
Sunday afternoon



Join our church family for a weekend away - spend time learning, praying, worshipping and relaxing with Parish friends - old and new.

- Spiritual Refreshment
- Building friendships
- Expanding our Vision
- Building community
- Great venue with delicious food and a bar

See leaflet available from Parish Office or our churches.

Parish Away Day for Adults and Children on Saturday 12th September 2026 (note change of date)

Details will be available shortly

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.



**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>

April 2026 Services

Holy Week Services

Monday 30th March

St. Alphege 8.00 p.m. Taizé

Tuesday 31st March

St. Alphege 8.00 p.m. Stations of the Cross

Wednesday 1st April

St. Michael's Chapel 10.00 a.m. Eucharist

St. Alphege 8.00 p.m. Eucharist

Thursday 2nd April – Maundy Thursday

St. Alphege 10.30 a.m. Eucharist, Prayers for Healing & Anointing

St. Helen with St. Michael 6.00 p.m. Agape Meal and Service

St. Alphege 8.00 p.m. Eucharist, followed by The Watch until 10.00 p.m.

Friday 3rd April – Good Friday

St. Alphege 9.45 a.m. All Age Service and Activities

Town Centre 11.00 a.m. Walk of Witness (Churches Together)

Start from St. Augustine's

St. Alphege 2.00 p.m. Devotions at the Foot of the Cross

St. Helen 8.00 p.m. Tenebrae

Saturday 4th April – Holy Saturday

St. Helen 9.30 a.m. Quiet Morning

St. Alphege 8.00 p.m. Easter Vigil – Sung Eucharist

Sunday 5th April – Easter Day

St. Michael's Chapel 6.30 a.m. Easter Dawn Service

St. Alphege 8.00 a.m. Said Eucharist

St. Alphege 9.30 a.m. All Age Holy Communion

St. Helen 10.00 a.m. Holy Communion

St. Michael 10.30 a.m. Sung Eucharist

St. Alphege 11.00 a.m. Choral Eucharist

St. Alphege 8.00 p.m. Compline

Wednesday 8th April

St. Michael 10.00 a.m. Eucharist

Thursday 9th April

St. Alphege 10.30 a.m. Eucharist

Sunday 12th April – Easter 2

| | | |
|-------------|------------|-----------------|
| St. Alphege | 8.00 a.m. | Said Eucharist |
| St. Alphege | 9.15 a.m. | Journey Service |
| St. Helen | 10.00 a.m. | Holy Communion |
| St. Michael | 10.30 a.m. | Eucharist |
| St. Alphege | 11.00 a.m. | Sung Eucharist |
| St. Helen | 5.00 p.m. | Healing Service |

Wednesday 15th April

| | | |
|----------------------|------------|-----------|
| St. Michael's Chapel | 10.00 a.m. | Eucharist |
|----------------------|------------|-----------|

Thursday 16th April

| | | |
|-------------|------------|-----------|
| St. Alphege | 10.30 a.m. | Eucharist |
|-------------|------------|-----------|

Sunday 19th April – Easter 3

| | | |
|-------------|------------|------------------|
| St. Alphege | 8.00 a.m. | Said Eucharist |
| St. Alphege | 9.30 a.m. | Journey Service |
| St. Helen | 10.00 a.m. | Morning Praise |
| St. Michael | 10.30 a.m. | Eucharist |
| St. Alphege | 11.00 a.m. | Choral Eucharist |
| St. Alphege | 5.00 p.m. | Taizé |

Wednesday 22nd April

| | | |
|-------------|------------|-----------|
| St. Michael | 10.00 a.m. | Eucharist |
|-------------|------------|-----------|

Thursday 23rd April

| | | |
|-------------|------------|-----------|
| St. Alphege | 10.30 a.m. | Eucharist |
|-------------|------------|-----------|

Sunday 26th April – Easter 4

| | | |
|-------------|------------|--|
| St. Alphege | 8.00 a.m. | Said Eucharist |
| St. Alphege | 9.30 a.m. | Journey Service |
| St. Helen | 10.00 a.m. | Holy Communion |
| St. Michael | 10.30 a.m. | Eucharist |
| St. Alphege | 11.00 a.m. | Sung Eucharist – St. George's Day Parade Service |
| St. Alphege | 5.00 p.m. | Evensong |

Wednesday 29th April

| | | |
|-------------|------------|-----------|
| St. Michael | 10.00 a.m. | Eucharist |
|-------------|------------|-----------|

Thursday 30th April

| | | |
|-------------|------------|-----------|
| St. Alphege | 10.30 a.m. | Eucharist |
|-------------|------------|-----------|



The Guardians of St Alphege Parish Church

As was highlighted last month, the Guardians website is now operating. It can be found at: <http://guardiansofstalphegechurchsolihull.co.uk>

With all websites the set up needs revision at times to make sure it delivers as hoped. Please feed back your thoughts as to how we might improve. Keeping it right up to date with events is another challenge which we hope to meet. Both Andy Moore and myself are in regular contact with the website team.

Upcoming Events

Saturday 18th April St. Alphege's Feast Day 10 a.m. to 4.0 p.m. St. Alphege Church
St Alphege History Fair.

The timetable for this event is as follows

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| 10.00 a.m. | Arrival |
| 10.05 a.m. | Welcome from Rector Nick |
| 10.15 a.m. | Talk and questions on the History of the Church |
| 10.50 a.m. | Talk and questions, Historic Solihull landowners |
| 11.25 a.m. onwards | Refreshments, Tours of the church, or tower or windows Exhibition and Bookstall |
| 1.15 p.m. | Talk and questions, Rector Charles Evans (1872-94) |
| 1.50 p.m. | Talk and questions, Story of the Bells |
| 2.25 p.m. onwards | Refreshments, Tours of the church, or tower or windows Exhibition and Bookstall |

Refreshments (tea/coffee/juice and cake) are included. Local history and archaeology groups will be joining us for this event. For tickets contact the trustees, myself (email below) or the Parish Office.

Thursday 4th June

Visit to Hartlebury Castle and Gardens, plus Bishop Hurd's Library

Please contact Rector Nick, the Parish Office or myself if you plan to join this event. The number of places available is restricted. Cost £12.

Tuesday 7th July

Guardians Summer Drinks Party.

Kindly hosted by Ann Taylor. An event for members. Further details to follow.

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 March 2026 to remember the following:

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 2 nd March | In loving memory of Jonathan Mark. |
| 6 th March | In loving memory of Fraser Mitchell. |
| 7 th March | Jane Yarnold. In loving memory of a beloved wife, mum and grandma. |
| 10 th March | Loving and treasured memories of Charles Dennis Hancock. |
| 13 th March | In loving memory of Betty Hartley on the anniversary her birthday. |
| 15 th March | In loving memory of a dear son and brother, Adrian Paul Cripps on the 6 th anniversary of his death. |
| 16 th March | In loving memory of Stan Boulter. |
| 16 th March | In ever loving memory of David Francis Wright. |
| 19 th March | Vera Yarnold. In loving memory of a dear mum, grandma and great grandma. |
| 22 nd March | In loving memory of Jean McDonough. |
| 22 nd March | In loving memory of the Revd. Canon Harry Hartley, Rector of Solihull. |



It was wonderful to welcome many members of our Rising Stars choirs to sing at the All Age Holy Communion service on Sunday 8th February – the Rising Stars choirs are funded by the Harlow Trust and take place in TGPA Yew Tree, Sharmans Cross and Langley schools, led by Chris Thomas and Allison Taylor. Here's hoping we see as many for the next All Age on Mothering Sunday.

In February Half-term, we ran a Chorister Experience Morning inviting children from local junior schools to come to spend a morning singing alongside our current junior choristers. Visiting children came from six different local primary or junior schools. A particular thank you to Pam and Alison for their support for the morning, and thank you to all the local schools who shared information about the morning.



Ash Wednesday also fell in Half-term, and the choirs were pleased to provide music for the Choral Eucharist that evening. Two of our youngest Senior Girls, Hasya and Victoria, worked hard to prepare the famous solo part of the *Allegrì Miserere Mei* – well done to both of them.

We are currently preparing music for the remainder of Lent, and looking forward to the joy of Easter.

Looking further ahead, please see details of future activities by the Choirs and the Friends of the Music on our *Save the Date* poster on page 29.

Isabel Baumber



S t A l p h e g e

Easter Day 5th April

9.30 a.m. All Age Holy Communion

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Saint Alphege History Fair

Saturday 18th April 2026 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

St Alphege Church

All welcome

History of the church

Historic Solihull landowners

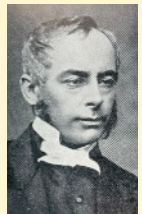
Rectors of influence

The bells

Tours of church, tower
and windows

Maps, bookstall
and exhibitions

Light refreshments included



A Guardians fundraising event

Tickets £10



Available from trustees, (07719 582768) or Parish Office



What's on for Families?

April

In The Week



Every Friday in term time between 9.30-10.30 am, £2
The Oliver Bird Hall, Church Hill, B91 3RQ



Friday 17th April, 4-6pm, £2.50 per person (£10 max)
St Helen's Church, 6 St Helen's Road, B91 2DA



Youth Club

Every Friday in term time between 5-6.30pm, yr6+
The Oliver Bird Hall, Church Hill, B91 3RQ

Sundays



Sunday 12th April - 9.30am
Sunday 19th April - 9.30am
Sunday 26th April - 9.30am

All at St Alphege Church, Church Hill, B91 3RT



All Age Worship

Friday 3rd April (Good Friday) - 9.30am

Sunday 5th April (Easter Sunday) - 9.30am

St Alphege Church, Church Hill, B91 3RT



Easter Dates 2026:

MONDAY 30TH MARCH - FRIDAY 3RD APRIL 2026

TUESDAY 7TH - FRIDAY 10TH APRIL 2026

sign up here!



sign up here!



Summer Dates 2026:

MONDAY 20TH - FRIDAY 24TH JULY 2026

MONDAY 27TH - FRIDAY 31ST JULY 2026

MONDAY 3RD - FRIDAY 7TH AUGUST 2026

MONDAY 10TH - FRIDAY 14TH AUGUST 2026

Christmas Dates 2026:

MONDAY 21ST - WEDNESDAY 23RD DECEMBER 2026

sign up here!





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COURAGE

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Friday 17th April 4-6pm
St Helens Church, B91 2DA

£2.50 per person, max £10 per family
Booking is essential..

Email: Childrensministry@solihullparish.org.uk
or complete the online form

<https://forms.office.com/e/H0CaCrd0r8>



Youth Stuff

Are you, or is someone you know in Year 6 and above, interested in joining a church youth group? Then do consider joining Solihull Parish Youth on a Friday evening, 5 p.m. – 6.30 p.m. in Room 6 at the Oliver Bird Hall. We meet to share sessions which 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.

Please email Lynn Smart for the registration link: L.smart@solihullparish.org.uk

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 **Funeral Partners**



As I write this article we at St. Helen's are reflecting on a very difficult few weeks in which two of our long-standing church members have gone to be with the Lord. Barbara Sears has been a much loved and faithful member of the church. She was a Reader for many years and a great prayer warrior for the church. She also started the Lydia group at St Helen's which is still going after 45 years. Peter Bottomley was a devoted worker for the church over many years. He served as Church Warden, DCC Secretary and Chair of the Building Committee for the building of the Youth Hall. Both will be sadly missed. We pray for family and friends but at the same time give thanks for their faithful service. We also lost Geraldine Lee who was a faithful attendee at the Wednesday lunches and we pray for her friends and family. We pray for John Smith's successful and swift recovery after his operation.

About this time last year we were concerned about the use of our building by other groups. The Montessori school was finishing and other groups no longer required accommodation and this was threatening our hall letting income which is so useful to us. One year on, it is difficult to find a time when most of the building is not in use. We have a new Ladybird Montessori school and other new lettings and our fears of loss of income have all but disappeared.

On 7th February we had our Wassail evening together with St. Michael's. It was a wonderful evening of fun, entertainment and food with a never-ending stream of jokes from Roger Chamberlain, music and community singing led by the St. Michael's musicians and poetry and sketches and plenty of food for everyone.

During Lent, together with each of our churches we have been following the Lent course on The Prayers of Jesus. We have two sessions on Monday in the afternoon and evening and these have been well attended.

Our Annual District Church meeting takes place on Sunday 22nd March after our morning service. Afterwards we are having a fellowship lunch. We pray for our District Church Council as they embark on a new year and as we consider plans for revitalisation.

On Palm Sunday our morning service features the dramatised reading of the events leading up to the Crucifixion. This is always a very moving rendition of the Gospel.

Our Wednesday lunches and second Wednesday Coffee and Cake continue and are a blessing to all attending. We are very thankful to Anne Noble, who has been carrying out a lot of extra work in the kitchen lately. The Coffee and Cake mornings are open to all and it is a helpful time where locals and our congregation are able to meet and share. Come and try it. You will be most welcome, 10.30 a.m. - 12.00 noon on the second Wednesday of each month.

We continue to support our mission partner Dr. Nicci Maxwell working in South Sudan. There is a deteriorating political and security situation there and many are struggling financially due to unemployment, non-payment of salaries, crime, foreign aid cuts and corruption. We are asked to pray for the neonatal ward team at Al Sabbah and for Nicci herself as she seeks to balance work and rest.

Lent Quiet Morning
'A Holy Saturday Church'



St. Helen's Church Centre, St. Helen's Road
'Holy Saturday', 4th April 2026

Refreshments available from 9.30 a.m. for a **10 a.m. start.**

10 a.m. – 10.10 a.m. Opening worship (Chapel)

10.10 a.m. first input session

10.15 a.m. – 11.10 a.m. sacred space**

11.10 a.m. second input session

11.15 a.m. – 12.10 p.m. sacred space**

12.15 p.m. closing worship and 'endings' (Chapel)

Ends 12.30 p.m.

.... but do take up the option to bring along a packed lunch so we can eat together before we leave.

**'Sacred space' is designed as time for you to spend with God on whatever it is that has been 'flagged up' for you during the input or worship.

Optional resources will be provided.

Contact Suzette to book: 0121 7090884 or
s.maguire@solihullparish.org.uk

Making Room for the Resurrection

It hardly seems a moment since Christmas, and yet here we are, on the brink of Easter. Unlike December, there's little fanfare to warn us it's coming. Easter begins more quietly — with ashes, honesty and the invitation to look at our own hearts.

Holy Week refuses to pretend life is neat and tidy. It takes us through betrayal, injustice and grief before we reach joy. Good Friday asks us to pause at the cross and remember that God has entered fully into human suffering. There is no darkness we face that Christ has not known.

Then comes Holy Saturday — that in-between day of silence and uncertainty. The disciples didn't know what was coming next. Many of us recognise that feeling, waiting, hoping, wondering if anything will change. Holy Saturday reminds us that God is still at work, even when we cannot see it.

And then, quietly, the stone is rolled away.

Easter morning begins not with power and spectacle, but in a garden, with tears turning to recognition. Resurrection is not simply a happy ending; it is the beginning of new life. The risen Jesus still bears his scars. Easter doesn't erase suffering — it transforms it.

That is good news for us. We all carry our own scars — griefs, disappointments, regrets. Easter doesn't pretend they didn't happen. It tells us they are not the final word.

In a world that often feels anxious and divided, Easter stubbornly proclaims that life is stronger than death, love stronger than hatred, hope stronger than despair.

As we gather this year — whether in quiet reflection or joyful song — we're not just remembering something long ago. We're celebrating a living hope.

Christ is risen. And that changes everything.

May this Easter bring you renewed hope, deeper peace and the courage to trust that new life is possible — even now.

The Easter services at St. Michael's are as follows:

Sunday 29th March – 10.30 a.m. Palm Sunday Eucharist

Wednesday 1st April – 10 a.m. Eucharist at the Chapel

Sunday 5th April - 6.30 a.m. Dawn Service in the garden

Sun 5 April - 10.30am Easter Day Eucharist

Chapel Chat will be on Thursday 2nd April (Maundy Thursday) from 2 p.m. until 4 p.m. in St. Michael's Chapel.

Save the Date!



SATURDAY
18
APRIL

COVENTRY CATHEDRAL VISIT

We're delighted to be travelling to Coventry to sing Choral Evensong in this iconic building, and to meet up with Liam again. Congregation members are very welcome.



SATURDAY
30
MAY

ST ALPHEGE GIN AND JAZZ FESTIVAL

This year's festival will have all the popular aspects of previous years, but some new and exciting attractions, including a broader range of music, and an experiment with 'G and Tea' - an afternoon tea with a difference!



SATURDAY
20
JUNE

HANDEL'S MESSIAH CONCERT

Featuring St Alphege Church Choirs, professional soloists and a professional orchestra, we are proud to present an evening concert performance of one of the most popular oratorios of all time.

"What's in a name?"

A few things recently have made me think about names (or titles), so I thought I would share some of these thoughts with you. Maybe one or other may strike a chord.

Shirley

On Tuesday 17th February we in the Wellbeing Wednesday community received some very sad news. That is, a long-term member of our community, Shirley Stanford, had died in Heartlands Hospital. At 86 years of age, Shirley suffered a mild heart attack on Saturday 14th, from which she never recovered. She died on Monday 16th with her close family around her.

Shirley, along with her friend Heather, originally joined us while we were still meeting at the Kitchen coffee shop (*now closed*). As well as enjoying Wellbeing Wednesday, Shirley enjoyed the Lent Group which then carried on, at the group's request, as 'Non-Lent' Group.

One of my favourite memories of Shirley, of which there are many, is the time when we enjoyed a Christingle game at the Greville Arms. We made a lot of noise, laughing and throwing dice to gain the various parts of the Christingle. As we were getting up to leave, someone on the next table asked us what we had been doing. At which point, before I could do anything in response, Shirley stood up with her Christingle as an example and told everyone who would listen what each part of the Christingle stood for. Ending with the immortal words: "*See Suzette, I **was** listening!*"

Looking it up, I find that the name Shirley is old English for 'Bright Meadow', and I feel that this is an appropriate description of our lovely friend. RIP Shirley, you will be missed.

Food4Thought

In fact, Shirley will be forever in our hearts and minds when we go along to Food4Thought, as it was actually she who named it.

The story goes like this: as we were finishing Non-Lent group one day, Shirley stood up and declared, "*I love these sessions! They always give me Food4Thought.*" With her delighted permission we adopted that title there and then!

Through our variety of discussions, we learnt that Shirley's favourite Bible verse was one she remembered from childhood, written in Micah, chapter 4, verse 4:

*"They shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees,
and no one shall make them afraid;
for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken."*

Even though more latterly she struggled with her eyesight and her hearing, Shirley came along and participated in Food4Thought right up until the end. We will miss her insights and her humour.

Do you have a favourite Bible verse? What gives you Food4Thought?

Pioneer Diary

Widow

*"Father to the fatherless, defender of widows—
this is God, whose dwelling is holy." (Psalm 68:5)*

Like many who come along to Wellbeing Wednesday, and/or Food4Thought, Shirley was a widow. Widowhood is something that I myself am having to learn about as I go along.

While I firmly believe that no bereavement is better or worse than any other, I would say that, in my limited experience so far, loss of a spouse/ life partner is **different** to other losses. This is seemingly backed up by the fact that loss of a spouse is the only loss where your legal title changes. That is, although legally I can still go by the title 'Mrs.', on my tax form, for example, I must now tick a box to declare that I am a widow. As far as I can see this doesn't happen with any other loss.

The Peace Prayer of St. Francis

The name of the month, April, comes from the Latin *Aprilis*, though its exact origin is uncertain. The most widely accepted theory is that it stems from the Latine verb *aperire*, meaning "to open", symbolizing the opening of buds and flowers in springtime, a concept echoed in the Greek word *anixi*, for spring.

Shirley had made her home at St. Francis Lodge, built on the site of the old St. Francis Church in our parish, and obviously named after it. I will end my random musings this month with the Peace Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, described as a timeless prayer for *peace, love, and service*. *If we pray to the Lord to make us his 'instrument' – that is, an implement for precision work - are we open to whatever that task (or tasks) may be?*

My prayer is that we will all let this prayer inspire us this coming month and beyond.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
 where there is hatred, let me sow love;
 where there is injury, pardon;
 where there is doubt, faith;
 where there is despair, hope;
 where there is darkness, light;
 where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master,
 grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console,
 to be understood as to understand,
 to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,
 it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
 and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

Thanks for listening!



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News from the Wider Church in the UK

Although this column usually focuses on news from the Church of England, I felt that this story was worth sharing! Oasis Church comes from the Baptist tradition, and there is much we can learn from their ministry of healing as we develop that ministry in our own parish.

The Oasis Church in Bath seeks to empower and equip local people to build on their strengths and skills to improve their lives, and to deal with trauma. The Oasis congregation includes a teacher of trauma-informed yoga, Anna Caldwell, who believes that the skills learned in yoga can be enormously helpful for traumatised people.

She says: "Trauma often causes individuals to disassociate from their internal experience. Trauma can distort our relationship to our bodies. It also leaves us stuck in the protection mode of 'fight or flight'. Trauma-Informed Yoga helps people rebuild a sense of safety and connection within themselves by working gently with the nervous system. It's less about perfect poses and more about choice, empowerment, and regulating the body's 'fight or flight' response."

When the project started, Oasis had existing partnerships with two charities focused on mental health: *Focus Counselling*, and the Bath branch of *Mind*, a national mental-health charity. Participants would be referred to the course by *Focus* or Bath *Mind*.

At the end of each course, the participants provided feedback in which some described the course as "life-changing", "very empowering", and "a sacred hour I looked forward to each week".

Jo Dolby, a leader at Oasis Church, says that while the course has been a wonderful success, she believes that it is important that Oasis doesn't simply deliver trauma-informed programmes, but is a trauma-informed church. This has often involved making small additions and changes, which can go a long way to help someone who has experienced trauma to feel safe and able to participate.

Some small examples of this would be providing warnings in advance when discussing a difficult topic that may cause anxiety for some people, and using a variety of names, metaphors, or pronouns for God, recognising that some may have difficulty with thinking of God as "Father".

Finally, says Jo Dolby, Oasis Church believes that trauma is not the end. Because of their focus on the resurrection of Jesus, Oasis believes that growth is possible, even after traumatic experiences. "While we may not be able to be who we were before our trauma," says Jo, "we can remake or reimagine ourselves into something or someone new, and even heal from our trauma, as we find people and places of safety where we can be fully ourselves."

For more information:

Oasis Church, Bath: www.oasisbath.org

Anna Caldwell: www.activestillness.org

(This is an abridged version of an article which was first published in the Church Times in March 2025.)

Fr. Simon

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Update from the Parish Wardens

As we have been enjoying observing the first signs of Spring, there have been some other encouraging shoots of growth across the Parish. In February half term, 16 young children attended St. Alphege Church to experience being a chorister for a morning; some of these have expressed an interest in joining the choir. On Ash Wednesday, over 150 people attended the four services around the Parish. Our Lent courses and the 321 Course have been well-attended. We do hope that these positive signs will continue over Easter and beyond.

Lent is nearing its end as we come to Passion Week and we look forward to celebrating the joy of Easter.



The Easter Leaflet shows the range of services and activities in Passion Week and through into Easter. This year we are having an Agape Meal at St. Helen's on Maundy Thursday which you may like to join, but do let them know for catering numbers. The timing has been arranged so that you can attend this and get to the service at St Alphege afterwards.

Please come to the Walk of Witness on Good Friday starting at 11 a.m. at St. Augustine's Church with a service in Mell Square along the way. It is a great way to witness to our Lord and to have fellowship, particularly afterwards when Pat Marshall and many others of you offer hospitality to people in the Parish. Details are shown elsewhere in the magazine.

We do give thanks to God for the life Barbara Sears who had served for so many years as a Reader. She spent most of her service at St. Helen's but made a significant contribution throughout the Parish.

The St. Helen's and St. Michael's Annual District Meetings have already been held and the St. Alphege Annual District General Meeting and the Annual Parish Meeting take place in April. Please do support them and be prepared to stand for election to the District Church Council and Parish Church Council. And there are other positions such as secretaries and wardens that need to be filled. Without these being filled it is hard for us to do all the tasks that are needed for our Parish to flourish and it also makes it harder for those already in positions.

If you have not done so, please apply to come on our Weekend Away at Launde Abbey in June. We have great plans to make this an enjoyable and valuable time when we and the Parish can grow together in faith and friendship. Leaflets are available and there is a video you can access on Parish website. Places are going well.

Please keep praying for all that is going on in the Parish.

**Pam Price
Andrew Williams
March 2026**



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Adventures in India

For our monthly meeting in March, Mothers' Union welcomed Sally Cox, a fellow member from St. James with All Saints Branch. Last year she had a desire to go on a trek with her sister-in-law to raise money for Mothers' Union, but the question was where to go? Sally's decision was to travel to Kerala in India including a sponsored 4-day trek from Cochin to the Western Ghats. Up to 70 kilometres of trekking were covered across a beautiful, mosaic of tea plantations peppered with tea pickers working for just £8 a day. Incredibly steep inclines were climbed to be up in the clouds of the Meesapulimala mountain peaks.



The trek continued through leech-infested Couch grass to lower ground, taking in local villages where they saw live 'chicken shops' and Hindu temples and experienced the delicious hot food from street vendors.

Sally was impressed with how religiously diverse Kerala was and their organisation of recycling bins! Her trek raised £1200 for Mothers' Union for which we say a huge "thank-you and well done!"

Elaine Diskin
St. Alphege Mothers' Union



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“He Who Sings Prays Twice.”

This well-known phrase may or may not have originated with St. Augustine of Hippo, but I expect many of you will know it and will, I hope, feel the power that singing can bring to our devotions. But, as any minister, or the person charged with choosing hymns knows, hymns can also be divisive. One person's favourite hymn can be anathema to another.

If asked to nominate my favourite hymn, I would have to say: 'it depends...' It depends on the season, even on the day. I'll begin at the beginning, with Advent. Then we can sing Bernadette Farrell's wonderful *'Longing for light, we wait in darkness'*. At Christmas, I have to name two: *'O little town of Bethlehem'*, whose words enable me really to pray twice, and *'O holy night'*, where it is as much about the tune as the words.

I never feel Lent has properly begun unless we sing a hymn I fear we will never sing here, *'Christian dost thou see them'*, which must be sung to the tune *'St. Andrew of Crete'*. It's one of those hymns that's very divisive. I have had sour looks from more than one organist whenever I have suggested it, but it really reminds me of the fortitude we need to get through that season. When we get to Passiontide I also have to nominate two. *'When I survey the wondrous cross'* is, arguably one of the finest hymns ever written, but my personal favourite is *'My song is love unknown'*, written in the seventeenth century by a man, but which sounds much more modern than that, and which I always imagine being sung by a woman: Mary Magdalene.

But then we come to Easter, the feast we will be celebrating soon after you receive this magazine and the holiest time of all: an embarrassment of riches where hymnody is concerned. My training incumbent's favourite hymn, written by the man who was principal of Kelham Theological College, where he trained, was *'Walking in a garden'*. We do sing it here, but not to the tune its author intended it to be sung to, which is *'Puff the magic dragon'*. I don't know, but I suspect the reason it isn't the tune which appears in any of our hymnbooks, is for copyright reasons. My training incumbent is no longer with us, but we sang it at his funeral to that tune, and whenever we sing it, even to a different tune, I think not only of him but of the congregation of St. John's church where I spent a difficult but ultimately fulfilling curacy.

But what is my favourite Easter hymn? It's wonderful to sing *'Love's redeeming work is done'* at the end of the Easter Vigil which so beautifully marks the end of the sadness of Passiontide and the beginning of the joy of the Resurrection. And I have always loved a procession on Easter morning, singing *'Hail thee, festival day'*, though it's complicated since the tune changes from one verse to the next. At the offertory there is *'At the Lamb's high feast we sing'*, with its final verse beginning, *'Paschal triumph, Paschal joy'*, but I suppose the finest of all is *'Thine be the glory'*.

All those glorious, uplifting hymns; all that joy! But for us to feel the full joy of Easter, I think we also need to experience the anticipation of Advent, the first joy that is Christmas, the reflective time of Lent, the sorrow of Passiontide. The whole of the Christian year, with its opportunities to sing our faith in so many different ways is to pray many more times than twice.

Revd. Anne

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For Your Diary



Thursday 2nd April : 1.00pm in the OBH. *Lent Lunch and Meditation* with Anne Haselhurst.
N.B. This is Maundy Thursday.

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

Saturday 25th April : 10.30am at St James Church, Shirley. *MU Members Meeting*.

Thursday 7th May : 1.30pm in St Alphege Church. *British Sign Language* with Shakila Kosar.

Thursday 21st May : 10.30am 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

The next meeting for this friendly Lunch Club will take place on Friday 3rd April. If you are interested in joining the group for friendship and a good meal, please contact Carol Caldicott, on the phone 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*.

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