

# SOLIHULL PARISH NEWS



# 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 7<sup>th</sup> June 11.00 a.m.

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June 9.30 a.m.

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June 11.00 a.m.

Parish Eucharist for all ages

All Age Holy Communion in the church

Choral Eucharist

5.00 p.m. Evensong, except:

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June 5.00 p.m.

Taize service

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 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> June

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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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[parishnews@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:parishnews@solihullparish.org.uk)

## *Cover picture*

**St. Alphege Choir at Coventry Cathedral**

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## Can the End justify the Means?

As I write, today is polling day (Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May) and our Oliver Bird Hall a polling station. With every ward up for election and three votes at our disposal it will be fascinating to see the makeup of our newly elected council. And whatever this might be, I look forward to working positively – recognising that our relationship is a privileged one, symbolised through the Civic Service at St. Alphege (this year on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> July), and therefore something we must cherish.

Sad to say, there is not a lot of trust and positivity around politicians and politics these days – but whatever political woes we might feel, I am at least grateful that as a society we continue to mind when those in public office do not speak the truth and to care about the behaviour of those who lead us. And I still find it shocking that there are parts of the world where people apparently care much less about the personal morality of their leaders – even idolising leaders who habitually lie, who unashamedly elevate self-interest, and who seemingly regard some lives as expendable towards whatever aims they are seeking. It is said that many hold their noses as they vote for such leaders, doing so because they broadly support their aims – because, as they see it, *the end justifies the means*. But does it? And can it ever?

This phrase has a long history. Napoleon wrote it in the margin of his copy of Machiavelli's 16<sup>th</sup> century treatise, *The Prince*, alongside very similar words in that text, 'In the actions of all men... one looks to the end.' The phrase is in fact much older still, appearing within *Heroides*, an epic poem by Ovid from the year 10 B.C. In Latin it reads, '*exitus acta probat*' which is translated 'the result justifies the deeds.'

In philosophy this is labelled Consequentialism, Moral Relativity, or Situation Ethics. And some Christians have sought to justify this approach as '*using the devil's tools to do God's work*.' But Jesus never condoned unholy behaviours to establish the kingdom. And Saint Paul, when accused of this very thing, writes expressly against it in his Epistle to the Romans (3.8).

When we stop to think about it, such an approach is not only disobedient but betrays a lack of patience and trust in God.

And when we stop to think about it, this approach also upends the law which exists to ensure fair and proper process in the name of justice. And looking again beyond our shores, it seems to me that we are increasingly witnessing vigilantism on the world stage, undermining the painstaking work over many decades towards the creation of multilateral bodies without which we have no good way of addressing global challenges.

Turning back to theology, I can hear some objecting that surely God's plan of Salvation is the ultimate example of evil means towards the best of ends. But this is to misunderstand the cross. For God the Father doesn't orchestrate his Son's death. Rather we see the Creator of the Universe entering this fallen world as a vulnerable newborn child, and this same Jesus acting constantly with uncompromising goodness, allowing the worst evils of this world to have their way with him, in the knowledge that love is eternal, that justice must ultimately prevail, and evil would thus be defeated.

The same is also true for us. We are called to nurture the fruit of the Spirit within ourselves – that is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control

– and in loving service to give generously and sacrificially of ourselves. And we must beware short cuts which risk the soul.

In speaking of politics and theology there is a danger that all this might seem rather abstract. Nothing could be further from the truth; indeed, I have written about this because it matters in the here and now.

It matters that we stand against the spirit of our age which in its arrogance seeks to short-cut proper process at the expense of mercy and justice. It matters that we support good people in politics regardless of their party affiliation and that we pray earnestly for all politicians. It matters that in every decision we are part of we continue to care about the means as much as the end. It matters that we continue to care about honesty, integrity, compassion, and service as we manage our own lives and as we manage every aspect of the life of the Church.

A key verse in all this is 2 Corinthians chapter 9 verse 8 which has been summarised:

*'The work of God, done in the manner of God, always brings the blessing of God.'*

May it be so.

**Revd. Nick**

## **Steve Tremayne**

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# Roundabout

## Solihull Parish Puppets

**F**antastic news! **The Equip Festival** is coming to Solihull this year!

Several members of Solihull Parish Puppets, past and present, have had the privilege of attending the Equip Festival over the last few years, either in Derby or Rugby. It has been such a great source of inspiration and learning, as well as a lot of fun, not to mention the opportunity to take up a challenge when we have been brave enough to enter a puppet performance competition!

The Equip Festival, a Creative Ministry Conference organised by One Way UK, will be celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> year this year and for the first time ever, it is going to be held in Solihull at The Renewal Church in Lode Lane! This is an opportunity not to be missed.

*"World-class speakers, inspiring showcases, tons of breakout sessions on creative ministry topics, loads of fun, connection, and fresh inspiration for your team!"*

*Whether you're passionate about puppets, storytelling, kids' ministry, outreach, worship, creativity, or sharing the Gospel in new ways... this is the place to be." Cam - One Way UK*

So, if you're interested in finding out ways of developing ministry in a variety of different ways, or even just finding out more about puppets and how to use them, I heartily suggest you book a ticket and come along to the Equip Festival. You won't be disappointed!

Tickets will have gone on sale 15<sup>th</sup> May. Further information can be found at [equipfestival.com](http://equipfestival.com)

**The dates for your diary are Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> and Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2026.**

Hope to see you there!

**Ruth Sabbagh**

## Open the Book

**W**e're looking for enthusiastic volunteers to join our *Open the Book* team!

Open the Book helps to bring Bible stories to life for primary school children through fun, engaging drama and interactive storytelling. No acting experience is needed—just a willingness to get involved, work as part of a team, and share these stories in a lively and accessible way.

If you enjoy working with children and want to make a positive impact in local schools, we'd love to hear from you.

To find out more or get involved, email: [childrensministry@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:childrensministry@solihullparish.org.uk)

Thank you in advance.



## Parochial Parish Council Update

Solihull Parochial Parish Council Annual Meeting was held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2026. If you are registered on Church Builder you should have received minutes of the meeting and a copy of the Report booklet detailing all that goes on across the three District Churches of St. Alphege, St. Helen and St Michael. Information is also available in hard copy at each of the churches. As well as reporting on the activities of 2025, elections took place for the coming year. The following individuals were duly elected to serve alongside our Rector Designate, Revd. Nick Parker:

**Parish Wardens:** Pam Price Andrew Williams

### Deputy Wardens:

St. Alphege – (two vacancies)  
St. Michael – Keith Wilson  
St. Helen – Chris Carrington

### Lay Members of the Yardley and Solihull Deanery Synod (2026-2029):

Chris Carrington (St. Helen)  
Rachael Linstead (St. Alphege)  
Keith Wilson (St. Michael)  
Graham Hindley (St. Alphege)  
Deirdre Moll (St. Alphege)

### Lay Members of the Parochial Church Council:

#### D.C.C. Lay Representatives:

##### St. Alphege

Tim Drakeford  
Carol Southworth

##### St. Helen

Les Prescott  
John Rea

##### St. Michael

Merrill Flood  
(one vacancy)

#### Directly Elected Representatives:

Andrew Halstead  
Julia Hanson (Secretary)  
Jaspal Singh  
Ben Yates  
(one vacancy)

#### Co-options:

Revd. Sue Chandler  
Martin Finch (Treasurer)

As you will see, there are a few vacancies.

If you want to find out more, please contact Julia Hanson PCC secretary on [pccsecretary@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:pccsecretary@solihullparish.org.uk) or speak to any of the above.

# Roundabout

## The History Fair 2026

On the weekend of our Patronal Festival, a History Fair organised by The Guardians of St. Alphege was held in church on Saturday 18th April. It is hoped that this will be the first of many.

The event featured four talks and three tours. There was ample opportunity between the talks, of about half an hour each, to stroll around the exhibitions at the back of church and chat to the exhibitors from The Solihull Local History Circle and The Solihull Archaeological Group. Under the tower were a range of board presentations of local history related stories, including the bells. In the chancel, Peter Thornton displayed a series of old maps. Complimentary refreshments were provided at the back of the church, and many local history related books were for sale.

The Fair was well-supported, with about seventy-five attendees, about fifty of whom took part in the tours.

The first talk, by Martin Ayres, featured the ever-popular model of the church showing how it developed over the centuries, pieces of the model being successively removed and added as the growth of the church was demonstrated.

The second, by Gordon Bragg, took us through many well-known local names who owned land in the area and influenced the development of Solihull.

The third, by Roger Shinton, concentrated on one particular Rector, Canon Charles Evans, and the long-lasting influence he had on the church and the wider community of Solihull.



The last, by me, told the story of how we arrived at the current set of bells from what we know to have existed many centuries ago. Perhaps I will tell that tale here another day.

The three tours were of the church, the stained-glass windows and the tower and bells, each run twice. All were well-attended.

**Keith Whitehead**

## Memory.....

When he came across the little box, he knew what he would find on lifting the lid. But he hesitated, not sure that he was ready for the ache to his heart the memory would bring.

After a long pause and soft sigh, he fumbled the lid off and saw the pressed buttercup from all those years ago. The sun yellow petals were crisp dry with browned edges as if lightly grilled. The delicate filaments at the centre were remarkably still intact, like threads of trembling copper wire.

'Don't forget your school bag Aaron.'

With a giggle and the roll of the eyes the eleven-year-old swung his bag on his shoulder and the two of them set off for the fifteen-minute walk to school across the country lanes beside the house.

They walked in comfortable silence along the dappled path, with Aaron jabbering now and again about some X-box game he had played last night.

But the father was only half listening...he knew today's walk to school was different and special. Father and son had done the walk countless times over the years, through snow, rain, sunshine...and across the seasons of the year. Each spring the father would exclaim 'Look buttercups Aaron' and the boy would nod absently, nothing amazing there to look at.

But this spring and this day the father knew would be the last time as Aaron was off to big school...so on exclaiming 'Look buttercups Aaron' he swooped down to pick one up.

'Look closely Aaron, isn't it beautiful?'

'If you say so Dad.'

The father smiled, as they carried on walking and quietly but gently slipped the flower into his pocket.

Later on, after the walk back home, he would press the flower into a book and carefully place it on the top bookshelf.

Now, with the passing of so many years, the memory of that afternoon came back with a soft stab to his heart as he looked at the buttercup.

'Is the same light of that morning captured in you my petal,' he whispered to the flower. He had wanted time to stop that morning, so he could savour his boy, as a little boy forever.

He had lingered long at the school gates as he watched his boy skip over to his friends, then the back of his head disappear through the doors, but time like an unyielding escalator, had carried him away, even though his legs were firmly planted and refused to walk away.

The boy was a man now, long moved away to the city with a job and family. Distanced by time and space, the father, also himself now white haired and bowed with age, smiled at the dried, yellow, almost tissue like flower in his hand...as for the fleeting passing of a moment, he knew he'd taken his little boy back to school.

# Roundabout

## Books 4 Home.

**2026** is the **National Year of Reading** and reading is one of the Rotary Clubs' Areas of Focus. We know the power that literacy has to spark imagination, confidence and a lifelong love of reading, while assisting learning and giving pleasure in relaxation.

All Rotary Clubs and their members are collecting 200+books for each school. **Good quality used children's books** are to be presented to local primary schools for children to take home to read and keep forever.

We are planning to supply 200 books each to three Primary Schools in Solihull, or maybe to four schools if we can find enough books.

There are 1500 Rotary Clubs in the UK, so nationally we have a significant task to complete. According to the National Literacy Trust, children's enjoyment of reading is at an all-time low, with an acute decline among primary-aged children, which is a very serious situation.

If you can help with this project, please give donations to Phil Godfrey 07770 407870 or let him know by email [philcgodfrey@btinternet.com](mailto:philcgodfrey@btinternet.com)

## 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**

3 <sup>rd</sup> June	Roman Rudnytsky, piano
10 <sup>th</sup> June	Stuart Ironside, guitar
17 <sup>th</sup> June	Harry Brown and Lewis Kirk, organ and trumpet
24 <sup>th</sup> June	Himley Duo - Anna Downes and Tony Bridgewater, violin and piano

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# Roundabout

## Mothers' Union



In April, Birmingham Mothers' Union met at St. James, Shirley for their Spring Members' Meeting. This is an opportunity for branches across the diocese to come together for worship, fellowship and Mothers' Union news.

Our speaker for the meeting was Paul Morris from Coventry Diocese Mothers' Union. He spoke about an inspiring homelessness initiative where they collect specific food, toiletries, clothes and household goods. Participating churches have a blue wheelie bin in church where the items are donated, and they are promptly delivered to hostels and the homeless within the diocese. This fairly new 3-year M.U. project is a huge success and is going from strength to strength. We are hoping Paul will come to one of our monthly meetings next year - perhaps this is something we could do?



Susan Haigh, branch leader, was awarded a certificate for her membership of 55 years. Susan was enrolled at St. Paul's, Winlaton, in Tyne and Wear. Very young and new to the area and not knowing anyone, Susan became a regular member and over the years has taken on various official roles. Susan has seen many changes in M.U. especially where we now welcome all women and men to join us as members. Mothers' Union remains an enjoyable and busy part of Susan's life.

We have a lot going on this year and we look forward to a Quiet Day on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June at St. Paul's Convent, Selly Park Road. This reflective and relaxing day will be led by Reverend Anne Haselhurst. Lunch and refreshments are provided throughout the day and everyone is welcome to attend. Booking can be made through <mailto:office@mubham.org.uk> or please let Elaine Diskin know <mailto:elainediskin@hotmail.co.uk> The cost is £20.

Our May meeting was held in church as it was Polling Day. The Committee presented an interesting slide show on Mary Sumner who was the founder of Mothers' Union in 1876.

A young, married woman with a baby, she had a vision of bringing other mothers together. From what started as a tentative meeting in her living room unbelievably grew to be a world-wide movement.

Her work through Mothers' Union continues today:-

- Supporting families in adversity
- Addressing poverty, illiteracy and gender-based violence
- Advocating for justice
- Praying without ceasing

# Roundabout

Our next meeting is Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June at 1.30 p.m. in the Oliver Bird Hall. We will be having a Strawberry Tea to celebrate the life of Mary Sumner and 150 years of Mothers' Union. Do come and join us and find out more - perhaps you would like to become a member and be part of this wonderful organisation?

<http://www.mothersunion.org>

**Elaine Diskin**



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# Let us Pray

## Calendar and Prayer Intentions for June 2026

1	Visit of the BVM to Elizabeth (Festival)	For missionaries travelling to share the Good News.	Lighthorne Road
2	Feria	For all sitting exams at this time.	Links Drive
3	Martyrs of Uganda 1885-1977	For all facing persecution because of their loyalty to Christ.	Linton Avenue
4	Corpus Christi (Festival)	In thanksgiving for Christ's gift of Holy Communion.	Linwood Road
5	Boniface (Wynfrith), bishop, martyr, 754	For the ecumenical work of the Diocese in Europe.	Littleton Croft
6	Ini Kopuria, Melanesian brotherhood, 1945	For an end to racism in the Church.	Littlewood Close
7	<b>2 Pentecost (Trinity 1)</b>	For our parish away weekend and renewal of the Church.	Lode Lane
8	Thomas Ken, bishop, hymn writer, 1711	For all being baptised and/or confirmed today.	Lovelace Avenue
9	Columba, Abbot, Missionary	For the ministry of the Iona Community.	Lugtrout Lane
10	Feria	In thanksgiving for Celtic spirituality.	Malvern Park Avenue
11	Barnabas the Apostle (Festival)	For all who lack self-belief to find encouragement.	Manor Road
12	Feria	For all exploring a vocation to ministry.	Manor Walk
13	Feria	For a Church which is intercultural and inclusive.	Maplebeck Court
14	<b>3 Pentecost (Trinity 2)</b>	For the Church's healing ministry.	Marsh Lane
15	Evelyn Underhill, spiritual writer 1941	For spiritual directors and practice of contemplative prayer.	Marsham Court Road
16	Richard, bishop, 1253	For our bishops Michael and Esther.	Martley Croft
17	Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, social reformers	For safe affordable homes and universal education.	Maybridge Drive
18	Bernard Mizeki, martyr, 1896	For peace, justice, and reconciliation.	Mayfield Close
19	Sundar Singh, sadhu (holy man), evangelist	For the gift of the world-wide Church.	Maythorn Grove
20	Feria	For the homeless and the charities who support them.	Melford Hall Road
21	<b>4 Pentecost (Trinity 3)</b>	For our churches, that we would practice Christ's hospitality.	Mell Square
22	Alban, first Martyr of Britain, c. 250	For those who risk themselves for the safety of others.	Melplash Avenue
23	Ethelreda, Abbes, c.678	For monastic communities and the Diocese of Ely.	Merrington Close
24	Birth of John the Baptist (Festival)	For those finding it difficult to conceive.	Miall Park Road
25	Feria	For candidates preparing for Ordination.	Middlewood Close
26	Ember Day	For our spiritual renewal through prayer and fasting.	Milcote Road
27	Cyril, bishop, teacher of the faith, 444	For theological colleges and seminaries.	Mill Lane
28	<b>5 Pentecost (Trinity 4)</b>	For the Church's unity and witness.	Mirfield Road
29	Peter and Paul, Apostles (Festival)	For all churches so dedicated.	Moat Lane
30	Feria	For apologists and defenders of the faith.	Monastery Drive

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

## **From the St. Alphege Register**

### **Baptisms**

26 <sup>th</sup> April	Alice Grace Grove at St Alphege Matilda Lucia Davies Marshall at St Alphege
3 <sup>rd</sup> May	Lily Clare Horner at St Alphege Amorie Jai Christie at St Helen's Luella Emma Christie at St Helen's Vienna Anne Christie at St Helen's

### **Weddings**

None

### **Renewal of Vows**

None

### **Funerals**

30 <sup>th</sup> April	Michael Gregory Butler at Robin Hood Crematorium
5 <sup>th</sup> May	Wendy Margaret Meikle at St Alphege
18 <sup>th</sup> May	Beryl Mavis D'Alton at Robin Hood Crematorium

### **Interment of Ashes**

30 <sup>th</sup> June	Heather Alice Clarke
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## **Names taken from the Chantry Book for Remembrance in June**

Albert Thomas Clark	Michael Hartley	Colin Price
Muriel Greasley	Mary Josephine Marston	George Sabbagh
June Hale	David Oakes	John Sawle
Henry Raymond Hall	Jordan Page	Doris Starbuck
Ross Harper	Harry Pinfold	

## Worship Notes for June

This year the feasts of *Pentecost* and *Trinity* both fall in May which means that this month of June is 'Ordinary Time' in church parlance. Sundays are variously counted from *Trinity Sunday* (31<sup>st</sup> May) or *Pentecost* (24<sup>th</sup> May) and so the first Sunday in June (7<sup>th</sup>) can either be labelled the *First Sunday after Trinity (Trinity 1)* or the *Second Sunday after Pentecost (2 Pentecost)*.

I prefer the latter, finding it most helpful to speak of this long season between *Trinity* and *All Saints* as the '*Season of Pentecost*', which avoids the misapprehension that this season is ordinary, dull, or boring. By no means! Indeed, this season presents a wonderful opportunity to examine the public ministry of Jesus – His teachings, parables, and miracles – guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit at work in and through Him.

The liturgical colour – green - denotes renewal and growth. Renewal in our daily life of discipleship as we seek to model ourselves on Jesus Christ, and growth in our life together, as we seek the guidance and power of Holy Spirit to animate all that we do and all that we are – evidenced in the fruit of the Spirit and supremely in love. This is also picked up in our Collects and Post-Communion Prayers which emphasise the nature of God as Holy Trinity, the unity we share in Him, and growth in love.

The final thing to say about June is that *Midsummer* – the longest day – falls this year on a Sunday (21<sup>st</sup>). Although not a Christian festival we will use the Midsummer theme for our next *Grounded Church* the following Saturday (27<sup>th</sup>). For those who have not yet experienced *Grounded Church* this is a wonderfully creative and inclusive space rooted in God's creation as a way of connecting with our Creator. With a simple liturgy and wide choice of activities it works well for people of all ages and backgrounds, and we would love to see you.

Revd. Nick



**St Alphege**

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June**

**9.30 a.m. All Age Holy Communion**



## **LAUNDE ABBEY WEEKEND AWAY**

5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> September 2026 (note change of date)

**Details will be available shortly**

### OLIVER BIRD HALL BOOKINGS

Enquiries are welcome for the use of the Hall and meeting rooms for social gatherings, christenings, anniversaries, meetings, etc.

Visit the website on:

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

or contact the Parish Office at:

[OBHBookings@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:OBHBookings@solihullparish.org.uk)

## June 2026 Services

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

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

### Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June

St. Alphege 10.30 a.m. Eucharist + Prayers for Healing and Anointing

### Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June – Trinity 1 (Parish Away Weekend)

St. Alphege 8.00 a.m. Said Eucharist  
St. Alphege 11.00 a.m. Parish Eucharist for all ages  
St. Alphege 5.00 p.m. Evensong

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

St. Michael 10.00 a.m. Eucharist

### Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June

St. Alphege 10.30 a.m. Eucharist

### Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June – Trinity 2

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. Eucharist  
St. Alphege 11.00 a.m. Sung Eucharist  
St. Alphege 5.00 p.m. Evensong

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

St. Michael 10.00 a.m. Eucharist

### Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June

St. Alphege 10.30 a.m. Eucharist

### Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June – Trinity 3

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

## Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June

St. Michael                      10.00 a.m.                      Eucharist

## Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June

St. Alphege                      10.30 a.m.                      Eucharist

## Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June

St. Michael                      3.00 p.m.                      Grounded Church (Midsummer)

## Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June – Trinity 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. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Evensong

## 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>**



## *The Guardians of St Alphege Parish Church*

There has been time to reflect on the St. Alphege History Fair in April. The event, talks, tours, displays and refreshments were very well received from feedback that has been given. The organisers from the Guardians, Local History and Archaeology groups are grateful for the kind support shown. It is clear local people have a real interest in finding out more about where they live and visiting the historic building. The St. Alphege team were well able to host an event like this in our fine church and were made welcome. As with everything, we can look at any learning points from our event. We are hoping we can build on our experience going forward.



### **Upcoming Events**

#### **Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June**

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

The main Castle displays the portraits and stories of the Bishops of Worcester going back 1000 years. The Hurd Library is very fine. We plan to arrive by 10.30 a.m. Please contact myself if you wish to consider joining this event. Cost of Castle entry £12.

#### **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July**

*Guardians Summer Drinks Party 6p.m. to 8 p.m.*

Kindly hosted by Ann Taylor. This has proved a very popular fundraising event for members in recent years. The cost is £10 and includes drinks and refreshments. Booking is now open. Please contact Martin Ayers to book by emailing [martinkayers@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:martinkayers@yahoo.co.uk) by the end of Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July.

#### **Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September**

*Autumn Coffee Morning at Baddesley Clinton. Details to follow.*

The team at Baddesley Clinton have very kindly agreed to support us running a Guardians fundraising coffee morning in a room adjacent to their café. Phil Godfrey has been organising this and further details will follow next month.

### **Other News**

Sarah Markham from the Parish Office and I are hoping to visit the Warwick Country Record Office soon to deposit some Parish Registers that are now full. We hope to hear how we can best liaise with them to keep records which are worthy of saving in good order.

**Roger Shinton (Trustee)**  
[rogershinton@outlook.com](mailto:rogershinton@outlook.com)



## Floodlighting

**T**he 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](mailto:russellpayne110@aol.com)

### **The Church was floodlit in May 2026 to remember the following:**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> May In loving memory of Tony Davies.
- 4<sup>th</sup> May In loving memory of Norman and Freda Rolfe, married this day in 1935.
- 5<sup>th</sup> May In fondest memory of Frazer Mitchell on what would have been his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- 6<sup>th</sup> May In loving memory of Jonathan Mark.
- 12<sup>th</sup> May James Mawson, in loving memory of a dear father on his birthday.

#### 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

#### GARDENING SERVICES

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# Music Matters

A highlight of April was our visit to Coventry Cathedral to sing Choral Evensong there. It was a busy day at St. Alphege as it was the same day as the Guardians History Fair.

We were delighted to link back up with Liam Condon, our former Assistant Organist, now Assistant Director of Music at Coventry Cathedral. Liam not only took care of organising our visit from the cathedral's perspective, but was also our organist for the service – it was lovely to see him again, and to hear him play.

We started the service with an unaccompanied introit *Jesu, the very thought of thee* by Christopher Tye, then continued with the *Rose Responses, Psalm 66* and Brewer's *Evening Canticles in D*. The anthem was the *Te Deum* from the *Collegium Regale Service* by Howells.



It was a first cathedral visit for both Lorelai and Jayden, and they certainly enjoyed the experience. We had a few minutes when we arrived to briefly talk about the history of Coventry Cathedral, the Charred Cross, and the Ministry of Reconciliation which the Cathedral is known for.





Thank you to everyone who made the trip such a success – Pam and Alison for practical support, Liam for all the organisation in Coventry and for playing for us, all choir members for their attendance and hard work, and to parents and family members for coming to support the service in the congregation.

The next day was our Patronal Festival, so another busy day for the choirs, with music specially chosen to help us think about St. Alphege's martyrdom and his contribution to our nation's faith. Chris comments, "At the 11a.m. Choral Eucharist our anthem, Ernest Bullock's *'Give us the wings of faith'*, emphasised the importance of Christ's victory: *'We ask them whence their victory came: They, with one united breath, Ascribe the conquest to the Lamb, Their triumph to his death'*. Then in Choral Evensong at 5 p.m., in Stanford's epic anthem *'For lo I raise up'*, we sang of the result of the life and witness of such saints: *'For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea'.*"

We're now looking forward to the Gin and Jazz Festival at the end of May, and our summer *Messiah* concert on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June.

**Isabel Baumber**

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**2:30-3:00PM**

**Twinkle Toes ages 3-4**

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WE DANCE  
WE SMILE**



# What's on for Families?

## June

### In The Week



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



Friday 19th , 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 21<sup>st</sup> June - 9.30am  
Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June - 9.30am

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



All Age Worship

Sunday 11th June - 9.30am  
Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June - 9.30am

St Alphege Church, Church Hill, B91 3RT



Grounded Church

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June - 9pm

St Michael's Church, Bryanston Road, B91 1BS

AGE 5+

Crafternoons

# HOLIDAY CRAFT CLUB

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## Summer Dates 2026:

TUESDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> - FRIDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2026

TUESDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> - FRIDAY 31<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2026

TUESDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> - FRIDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2026

TUESDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> - FRIDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2026

## Christmas Dates 2026:

sign up here!

MONDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> - WEDNESDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> DECEMBER 2026





# COME TO MESSY CHURCH

THIS MONTH WE ARE  
FOCUSING ON

## PURPOSE

WE WILL HAVE LOTS OF CRAFTS,  
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Booking is essential..

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or complete the online form

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



# Youth Stuff

If you're in **Year 6 or above**, come and check out **Solihull Parish Youth Club!** We meet every **Friday from 5.00–6.20 p.m.** in the **Oliver Bird Hall**, and it's a great place to hang out, meet new friends and have a brilliant time.

Expect **pizza, games, activities and plenty of laughs** in a relaxed and welcoming space where friendships grow and faith can be explored together.

**Best of all – it's completely free!**

Before coming along for the first time, you'll just need to register. To get the details and registration link, email **Lynn Smart** at [l.smart@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:l.smart@solihullparish.org.uk).

**You are  
Invited  
to Alpha**

**For the  
Explorers,  
Open-minded  
Still thinking  
curious**



**Start Date – Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2026 Time - 7.30pm**

- then Tuesdays after that. See below for dates and course content.

Where - St Michael's Chapel, Bryanston Road. B91 1BS

**Alpha is a series of excellent videos followed by group conversations that freely explore the basics of the Christian faith in an open, friendly environment. Everyone's welcome. Whatever your background or beliefs, you're invited.**

To sign up or find out more,

Email [alpha@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:alpha@solihullparish.org.uk) Or ring Parish Office - 0121 705 5350

[www.solihullparish.org.uk](http://www.solihullparish.org.uk)



## Alpha Course in Solihull Parish

**Here is a List of the Sessions. Tuesdays at 7.30pm**

Session 1	Is There More To Life Than This?	June 9 <sup>th</sup>
Session 2	Who Is Jesus?	June 16 <sup>th</sup>
Session 3	Why Did Jesus die?	June 23 <sup>rd</sup>
Session 4	How Can I Have Faith?	June 30 <sup>th</sup>
Session 5	Who Is The Holy Spirit?	July 7 <sup>th</sup>

Lent and Eastertide has been a time of spiritual togetherness between all three churches and also within the community. This is always a time of reflection and exploration which is enhanced by the opportunity to meet other members of the Solihull Church family.

The House Group combined with our Lydia Group to offer two meetings each week in Lent to explore the prayers of Jesus. Both were well attended and within these smaller groups all had the opportunity to contribute to discussion and all these contributions were valued. Our thanks go to Chris Carrington, Les Prescott, Mark Norman and Moira Wyatt for leading these groups. St. Helen's also hosted an *Agape Meal* on Maundy Thursday, to which we were very pleased to welcome members from both St. Alphege and St. Michael. The *Tenebrae Service* in the chapel on Good Friday evening was well attended and, as always, a service that is much appreciated by



those who come. Our usual *Easter Day Service* included a number of visitors and residents of St. Helen's Road, who are always welcome, and it was lovely to share in adorning with spring flowers the Easter cross which was then placed again outside the church.

We were very pleased to welcome Matthew Vaughan to speak at our *Morning Praise Service*. He lives in Bordesley Green and works with his wife Andrea through the local Anglican Church in this largely Muslim area. He continues to help to enhance relationships with local Muslims and was happy to report that his church's congregation is increasing, with a large number being baptised recently. We wish him and his family well and include him in our prayers for the strength to continue his sometimes overwhelmingly difficult work.

We are very grateful for all the hard work that goes into our Wednesday Lunches and Coffee and Cake Morning, which is spearheaded by Anne Noble. We still require cooks, especially now Ivan, one of our longstanding chefs, will be leaving the area. If you feel you could help in any way, either by cooking a main course, preparing a dessert, or by driving people to and from the church, please contact Anne (07808 722848), who would be most grateful for any assistance.

We are all saddened by the passing of our dear friend, Beryl D'Alton, who was one of the most long-standing members of St. Helen's. Although we haven't seen her in church for some time, she will be remembered for her dignity, her Christian faith, her beautiful speaking voice and her amazing skill as a knitter. We send our sympathy to her family.

Jean Fewins

# Save the Date!



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!

Gin and Jazz Festival  
bookings



Summer Concert  
bookings



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.

We are greatly blessed by the garden at St. Michael's Vicarage and Chapel. It is a lovely space which enables us to worship and to enjoy fellowship together throughout the year and is also a beautiful setting for the services at the chapel. As the year turns, the garden reflects the changes which each season brings as we observe the plants and animals which appear there.

For the last couple of years we have been surprised by the growth of Wild Carrot, or 'Queen Anne's Lace', which is the wild ancestor of the carrot we are more familiar with on our dinner plates. Wild Carrot grows up to 150 cm. tall and its leaves are feathery in appearance and give off an odour of carrots. The plant's broad, lacy, white umbels attract a broad range of pollinators including bees, hoverflies, beetles and solitary wasps.

We now also have regular appearances of Common Teazel. It produces flowering stems in its second year, which grow up to 2 m. tall. The conical prickly flower heads are covered in tiny purple blooms in midsummer, which attract bees. When the flower heads fade, the seeds of the teasel offer an important food-source for birds such as the goldfinch, which can be seen alighting on the old, brown flower heads in autumn to 'tease' the seeds from them.

Just as striking are the Teazel's leaves which are covered in prickles and merge together around the stem of the plant. They have a cup-like shape and can be found holding water after a rain shower. Indeed, it's this characteristic which gives the Teazel's genus its name, *Dipsacus*, which is derived from the Greek word for thirst, *dipsa*.

A third recent newcomer to the garden is the herb Self-Heal, which is part of the Mint family. Self-Heal isn't fussy about its habitat; it will grow on roadsides, waste-land, in woodland edges, as well as in gardens. It has an attractive flower-head which puts forth bluish or violet flowers in dense, oblong clusters on the top of its stems. And once flowering is finished, its purple-tinged seed head remains.

Self-Heal has a long tradition of use in herbal medicine for everything from stopping bleeding and healing wounds, to treating heart disease and sore throats. Its use in stopping bleeding has led to many alternative names, based around those implements and trades which might cause one to seek it out: hook-heal, sicklewort, and carpenter's herb. Self-Heal is also useful in the kitchen-garden as the young leaves and stems can be eaten raw in salads, and the plant as a whole can be boiled and eaten as a leaf vegetable (though I've not yet tried either of those serving suggestions!).

The appearance of these plants is a reminder of the richness of God's creation, and of the fact that the garden is to be shared so that we can all benefit from its beauty. One way in which we are currently doing that is at the Grounded Church gatherings which take place in the St. Michael's garden, and which are open to everyone in the parish. You can read a little more about this event in this month's Matters of Faith. Then why not come along to the next Grounded Church - or to the regular Wednesday 10 a.m. Eucharist - to see and enjoy the garden for yourself?

Fr. Simon



Join us for  
our next  
event

**Blossomfield Grange care home,  
Solihull**

**Eye care in later life**

**Thursday 18th June 2026, 2pm - 3pm**

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## "To Assume Makes an Ass Out of You and Me"

<sup>46</sup> As (Jesus) and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. <sup>47</sup> When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' <sup>48</sup> Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' <sup>49</sup> Jesus stood still and said, 'Call him here.' And they called the blind man, saying to him, 'Take heart; get up, he is calling you.' <sup>50</sup> So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. <sup>51</sup> Then Jesus said to him, 'What do you want me to do for you?' The blind man said to him, 'My teacher, let me see again.' <sup>52</sup> Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has made you well.' Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way. (Mark 10:46-52)

The story of the healing of blind Bartimaeus is a familiar one to many Christians, but I wonder if you have ever spent any time with it outside of hearing it read in church services.

For myself, I became better acquainted with blind Bartimaeus on a Church Army 'Explore your call' weekend back in the late 90's, and I confess that I developed a fondness for this reading that continues today.

Let's look at the reading in a nutshell: Jesus and the disciples are leaving Jericho on their way to Jerusalem; Bartimaeus shouts out to Jesus; he is told to be quiet; Bartimaeus shouts louder; Jesus hears him and invites him to come near; Jesus heals Bartimaeus; Bartimaeus follows Jesus.

That is the essence of Bartimaeus's story. However, that shortened version misses out a very important part of the story, when Jesus asks him the question –

*"What do you want me to do for you?"*

Importantly for us, we witness that Jesus doesn't just assume that Bartimaeus is a blind man and so must want his sight. Instead, Jesus asks a blind man – *What do you want me to do for you?*

What at first seems like a daft question is in fact a legitimate enquiry. We're told that Bartimaeus is a 'blind beggar' and, as such, he – and many others who couldn't do physical work – would have been accustomed to making his living this way. Once he had his sight returned to him, this living was no longer available to him, and who knows if he had a trade or occupation to fall back upon or indeed the physical strength to perform it. There is indeed a scenario where, having been given his sight back, Bartimaeus could have been worse off. So, Jesus asks the question: *What do you want me to do for you?*

And here's the crux of it: if that question is good enough for Jesus, it's good enough for us!

The question for us is, **how do we create the space to ask the question?**

We often think that we are giving someone what they 'need', even though we haven't asked them what they need. This has happened to me twice only recently. Twice someone has done something 'for' me, 'being helpful', when it wasn't helpful at all. And when I very tactfully pointed that out, they were then wounded, as to their mind they were only 'helping'. A no-win situation for everyone. *(Personal disclaimer: Please don't get me wrong - I am very grateful for ALL the help I have had over the last year, and I only use these two examples to illustrate the need to ask what will be helpful, rather than assume.)*

*Wellbeing Wednesday* is one place that we as a community (i.e. not just me) get to ask the question of each other. Sometimes we're told what people need, like with our regular Foodbank collections that coincide monthly with our 'first Wednesday lunch'. Other times we must listen and spend time with people before it's apparent or before they will tell us.

We also have Wellbeing Wednesday planning meetings and, as a result of requests shared at those meetings, the community has branched out into Canal & Coffee walks; first Wednesday lunches; a yearly charity commitment (this year our charity is Marie Curie Hospice); a regular book group; Food4Thought discussion group; Prayer Quarter; to name but a few.

As a pioneer minister and evangelist, it has always been my job to ask the question, *what do you want me to do for you?* I always do this in Jesus' name and, of course, to follow his example. BUT, and here's your part in this, it is not only my job. It is a job that relates to all of us.

How do we create the space to ask the question? It may vary from individual to individual, and from community to community, but the question needs to be asked:

*What do you want me to do for you?*

If it's good enough question for Jesus, it's good enough for us!

Thanks for listening!

**Suzette.**

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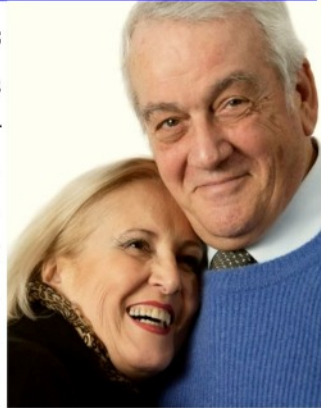


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## News from the Wider Church

As the purpose of this section of the Parish News is to give some information about news stories in the wider Church, particularly in the Church of England, I decided that a trawl through the current edition of the Church Times might provide a starting point.

I did not get very far because the first thing I noticed was that sixteen pages of this recent edition were filled with advertisements for vacant clergy posts, some ninety-eight posts in total. These were mainly for parish incumbents, vicars or rectors, but there were also vacancies for one Bishop, a number of deans of either cathedrals or theological colleges, several archdeacons, and a number of part time 'house for duty' parish clergy.

The years after the Second World War, 1945 to 1959, saw a large increase in the number of babies being born. These came to be known as 'baby boomers.' We 'boomers' are now in our sixties and seventies and therefore there is a bit of a boom in working people retiring, including of course clergy. Although I cannot be certain about this, it seems likely to me that at least some of the current crop of vacant clergy posts may be the consequence of retirements.

Which begs the question, where are new clergy coming from to fill these posts. I know of at least one parish in this diocese that has been in vacancy for three years. This is unusually long, but a vacancy of twelve to eighteen months is not uncommon. Advertisements for jobs which, anecdotally, might once have produced half a dozen applicants, today attract one or even no responses.

The feast day of St. Peter and Paul falls this month on the 29<sup>th</sup> June, a day often referred to as *Petertide*. This is one of the traditional days on which ordinations take place. Early in July you can expect the Church Times to contain several pages of photographs of those newly ordained either as deacons or priests. There will also be details of the parishes in which they will serve as curates. No doubt they will be received with joy.

The question is, will they last the course. How many will continue to serve in parish ministry until they reach retirement age? How many will continue after retirement? Some will of course continue. Some may go on and move into senior posts. We will always need bishops, archdeacons and cathedral deans. Some may be attracted by senior administrative posts. Some dioceses have found imaginative ways of combining administrative posts with parish ministry.

In the end, the Church needs more people to come forward and to offer themselves for ordination. We must pray for an increase in vocations to ordained ministry. We must pray too for those already ordained, that they continue in good physical and spiritual health. Please pray too for theological colleges and for all who are in training at this time, especially for those who are to be ordained this coming Petertide. The Church needs more deacons, priests and bishops, to preach the Gospel and to call more to follow our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Fr. Roy**



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## Update from the Parish Wardens

The History Fair at St. Alphege in April was a great success – led by Roger Shinton and his team from the Guardians with many other volunteers. It was very good to have talks expressing the Heritage of our church and Parish. Martin Ayres spoke about the history of the church building; behind him and the model of the church was a photo of the late David Patterson which seemed most apt, as David was an historian of our church and the author of the most recent guide-book. It was good to welcome the Mayor to the Fair.

On the same day the Choir sang Evensong at Coventry Cathedral which went very well as you will see elsewhere, and it was only a month previously that Revd. Nick was invited to Coventry Cathedral to preach at the service to mark Solihull School's 465<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its founding, as you can see on the photo. Nick spoke on Hebrews 12:1-2 and our perseverance in running our race of life.



And talking of Solihull School, we will be pleased to welcome Charles Fillingham, Executive Headmaster, to speak at our Men's Breakfast on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June – please do apply now.

We are launching another **Alpha Course** on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June. This is a great opportunity to invite people to explore the Christian faith and for others to refresh their faith. Please do invite people and come along yourself. We are looking forward to welcoming Bishop Esther to our Confirmation Service on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October.

When you see this, the Launde Abbey Weekend Away will be a few days away – there may be a few places left and please pray it will be a good time for the life and mission of our Parish as well as for individuals. Details will be available soon for the Away Day on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September at Newlands Bishop Farm at Catherine de Barnes.

A concert of Handel's *Messiah* is being performed on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June in St. Alphege Church by our Choir and an orchestra with musicians from far and wide. Ex-Chorister Tom Lilburn, who sang in the quartet at the funeral of Prince Philip, will be returning to sing the alto solos. This is certainly something to look forward to. Book your tickets now!

Please keep praying for all that is going on in the Parish, and all the current issues that need work and prayer.

Thank you for all your work and support.

**Pam Price**  
**Andrew Williams**

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# *Matters of Faith*

## **In the Book of Psalms, the writer declares:**

*When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—  
the moon and the stars you set in place—  
what are mere mortals that you should think about them,  
human beings that you should care for them?..  
You gave them charge of everything you made,  
putting all things under their authority—  
the flocks and the herds  
and all the wild animals,  
the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea,  
and everything that swims the ocean currents. (Psalm 8.3-4, 6-8)*

This psalm speaks of humankind's relationship to the elements of creation; the writer puts us at the centre of God's well-ordered universe. Not only have human beings been put in charge of everything which God has made, but the psalm speaks of the responsibility which humans have to care for creation.

God's creation is celebrated throughout the Book of Psalms. For example, Psalm 104 contains an extended celebration of the goodness and richness of creation:

*You make springs pour water into the ravines,  
so streams gush down from the mountains.  
They provide water for all the animals,  
and the wild donkeys quench their thirst.  
The birds nest beside the streams  
and sing among the branches of the trees.  
You cause grass to grow for the livestock  
and plants for people to use.  
You made the moon to mark the seasons,  
and the sun knows when to set.  
O Lord, what a variety of things you have made!  
In wisdom you have made them all.  
The earth is full of your creatures. (vv.10-12, 14a, 19, 24)*

Having seen all of this goodness, the psalmist responds by praising God:

*I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.  
I will praise my God to my last breath!* (v.33)

Elsewhere in the psalms, the writer delights in God as a result of reading and meditating upon God's Law:

*...they delight in the law of the Lord,  
meditating on it day and night.* (Psalm 1 v.2)

*I will delight in your decrees  
and not forget your word.* (Psalm 119 v.16)

However, it is interesting that the writer of the 'Creation' psalms comes to an understanding of God's splendour by observing what God has written into the world of nature.

St. Francis of Assisi follows this way of discovering who God is in his '*Canticle of the Sun*', a song of praise he composed in 1225. It is a beautiful song which offers praise to God for elements of creation:

*Praised be You, my Lord, with all your creatures;  
especially Brother Sun, who is the day, and through whom You give us light.  
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour,  
and bears a likeness to You, Most High One.*

The Canticle is the fruit of St. Francis' personal theology: he saw the natural world not as a completed project which God had now handed over to human beings, but as an ever-changing, living expression of who God is.

The Grounded Church event which has recently begun in our parish is seeking to follow in the footsteps of the psalmist and of St. Francis. It is an opportunity to explore the changing seasons of creation and to discover God speaking to us through the natural world.

The next Grounded Church gathering is on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June at 3 p.m. in the garden at St. Michael's Chapel. Everyone is welcome to come along - all you need is to dress for the weather, and to bring your sense of curiosity to explore God's creation.

*The world is charged with the grandeur of God.*

~ from '*God's Grandeur*', by [Gerard Manley Hopkins](#).

**Fr. Simon**

# For Your Diary



**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June** : 1.30pm in the OBH. *Strawberry Tea celebrating 150 years of MU.*  
**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June** : 10.30am in church. *MU Corporate Eucharist.*  
**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July** : *Annual Outing at St James the Great, Shirley.* Eucharist at 10.30am followed by *Lunch* at Plume of Feathers, Shirley at 1pm.  
**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July** : 10.30am in church. *MU Corporate Eucharist.*  
**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July** : 12 noon to 3pm at Birmingham Cathedral.  
*150 years Celebration of MU followed by a Service of Thanksgiving.*  
You can access more information on [www.solihullparish.org.uk/mothers-union](http://www.solihullparish.org.uk/mothers-union) and also from the website homepage top menu by clicking on **Connect** and then on **Mothers' Union**.

## WIVES' FELLOWSHIP

The next meeting for this friendly Lunch Club will take place on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June. If you are interested in joining this friendly group for fellowship and a good meal, please contact Carol Caldicott on the phone number below.

**Carol Caldicott**  
**0121 705 3168**

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<i>Circulation Enquiries</i>	<b>Helen Russell, 30 De Moram Grove, B92 0PZ</b>	07710 473 418
	Parish News is published every month except August and costs £1 per copy. The Annual Subscription is £10 for all 11 editions.	
<i>Printers</i>	<b>Prontaprint, 126 Station Road, Knowle, B93 0EP</b>	0121 705 9988

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