

SOLIHULL PARISH NEWS



No. 582

OCTOBER 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 11th October 9.30 a.m. Parish Eucharist for all ages

Sunday 18th October 11.00 a.m. Choral Eucharist

5.00 p.m. Evensong, except:

Sunday 25th October 5.00 p.m. Taizé 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 4th, 18th, 25th October and 1st November

St Helen

Sundays 10.00 a.m. Holy Communion

Third Sunday 10.00 a.m. Morning Praise

Tuesdays 9.00 a.m. Morning Prayer

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

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

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THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Visit our Website

www.solihullparish.org.uk

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

Cover picture

**Stained glass window of St. Luke
from Christ Church, Hendon.**

St. Luke's Day is 18th October.

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Editorial

The first Sunday in October is the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi, one of the best-loved Christian saints. His popularity is surely due partly to his care for animals, which many of us share in our own love of our pets, gardens and wildlife. A history of Francis, written in the 13th Century, expresses this aspect of Francis's nature:

"Whenever Francis found an abundance of flowers, he used to preach to them and invite them to praise the Lord... he used to call all creatures by the name of 'brother' and 'sister' and in a wonderful way, unknown to others, he could discern the secrets of the heart of creatures ..."

Francis related to Christ and all creation as brothers and sisters of the one universal family.

In 2026, we need to look to the example of Francis more than ever before. With all our modern comforts and conveniences, we are often alienated from the earth and, indeed, from ourselves. As scientific data and reports are highlighting, human beings have done enormous damage to the planet.

A report published in 2023 by the State of Nature Network www.stateofnature.org.uk found that between 1970 and 2016 the distribution of small mammals, such as mice, voles and shrews, decreased on average by 29% and mid-sized mammals, such as hares, showed a decrease of 15%.

Over a similar period of time, pollinating insects such as bees, hoverflies and moths, which play a critical role in food production, showed an average decrease in distribution of 18%. In addition, almost 1,500 species are now threatened with extinction in Great Britain.

The 4th October also marks the official end of the Season of Creation which we have been observing across the parish since the beginning of September. Although it would seem natural to now turn our attention to other matters, I would like to suggest that we build on that month of celebration and further strengthen our commitment to caring for the earth which God has given us.

In her introduction to the Church of England's observance of the Season of Creation, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd. Dame Sarah Mullally said:

"To care for creation is... an essential expression of Christian discipleship and an integral mark of the Church's mission: to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and to sustain and renew the life of the earth. As we follow Christ, we are called to share in his reconciling work, seeking justice, healing, and hope for the earth and for all who dwell within it."

In 2015, Pope Francis wrote about Caring for Our Common Home, the Earth. In the opening paragraph, quoting St. Francis, Pope Francis writes:

"Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. "Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs."

The way of St. Francis continues to address what is probably the most pressing concern of the age, that of the effect of human life and behaviour on the natural environment. Let us look to Francis, and discover him and his way of life once more; let us practise peace and justice and see God's creation for the infinitely good and precious gift it is wherever we can.

Fr. Simon

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Telephone No: 0121 705 3356

Roundabout

Mothers' Union



The September Meeting welcomed Leela Docherty and a Marie Curie volunteer to talk to members about the wonderful work of the Marie Curie organization

Supporting Local People Through Marie Curie

At Marie Curie, we believe everyone deserves the best possible care and support at the end of life, whatever their illness and wherever they are. Every day, our nurses, healthcare assistants and wider teams provide expert care to people living with terminal illness, while also supporting families and loved ones.

Here in the Midlands, Marie Curie provides a range of vital services. Our West Midlands Hospice cares for patients through its inpatient unit, outpatient and wellbeing services, as well as specialist support for families and those experiencing bereavement. We also provide Hospice Care at Home services across Birmingham and Solihull, helping people receive expert care and support in the comfort of their own homes. In addition, our free Information and Support Line offers practical and emotional guidance on everything from symptom management and caring responsibilities to financial information and bereavement support.

Marie Curie supports people living with any illness they are likely to die from, including cancer, heart disease, lung disease, dementia, motor neurone disease, Parkinson's and many other conditions. Our aim is simple: to ensure that nobody faces dying, death or bereavement alone.

Could You Volunteer with Us?

Volunteers are at the heart of everything we do. Whether you can spare a few hours occasionally or would like to become more regularly involved, there are a variety of opportunities available. From helping at fundraising events and collections to supporting our local fundraising team, volunteering is a rewarding way to make a real difference in your community while meeting new people and supporting a cause that touches so many lives.

Christmas Collectors Needed in Birmingham and Solihull

As we approach the festive season, we are looking for volunteers to help with our Christmas collections across Birmingham and Solihull. Just a couple of hours of your time can help raise vital funds that enable Marie Curie to continue providing expert end of life care and support to local families when they need it most.

If you, your church group, or anyone you know would be interested in volunteering or helping at a Christmas collection, we would love to hear from you.

To find out more, please contact **Leela Docherty, Community Fundraiser for Solihull & Birmingham**, on **0121 703 3715** or email leela.doherty@mariecurie.org.uk.

Together, we can ensure more people receive the care and support they need at the toughest time of life.

Leela Docherty

ST ALPHEGE BEER FESTIVAL



**Friday 30 October
Saturday 31 October**

Friday 5.30-10.30pm --- Saturday 12 noon-10pm

OLIVER BIRD HALL, CHURCH HILL ROAD, SOLIHULL, B91 3RQ.

**REAL ALES, CRAFT BEER, CIDERS, ALTERNATIVE DRINKS.
LIVE MUSIC, FOOD.**

www.solihullparish.org.uk/beer-festival

Entry £8. Advance bookings via the QR code. Charity 511237.



A Report from Dr. Neil Shastri-Hurst MP

Over the summer, I have been making the most of the opportunity provided by parliamentary recess to get out across the constituency, meet residents, visit local businesses and organisations, and hear directly about the issues that matter most to people across the Solihull West & Shirley constituency.

Local Business Visits

I have continued to make time to visit businesses and organisations across the constituency, including On Device Solutions and the Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals. It is fantastic to see both organisations thriving locally and contributing to the strength and diversity of our business community. Meeting the people behind these organisations also gives me the opportunity to hear about their ambitions, the challenges they face, and the wider issues affecting businesses in Solihull.

These conversations are an important part of my work as a Member of Parliament. Speaking directly to businesses gives me a much better understanding of the practical impact of Government policy and the challenges facing employers. Crucially, it allows me to take those experiences back to Westminster when scrutinising legislation and representing the interests of our local economy.

Constituency Tour

Over the course of two weeks, I completed a four-day tour of all seven wards in Solihull West & Shirley, visiting ten different locations across the constituency before finishing with a pop-up surgery on Solihull High Street.

It was a hugely worthwhile opportunity to speak to residents in a wide variety of settings and hear a real range of views and concerns. Some people came to raise specific local issues, others wanted to discuss national matters, and some simply wanted to have a coffee and a chat.



I think it is incredibly important that, as a Member of Parliament, I spend time listening to residents rather than making assumptions about what matters to them. These conversations give me a much better understanding of the issues affecting different parts of the constituency and, importantly, help shape the issues I take forward in Parliament.

A number of issues came up particularly strongly during the tour, and I am determined to do what I can to secure answers and action.

For example, fireworks and unsafe fires were a recurring concern, particularly where irresponsible use causes significant disturbance or creates a risk to residents and property. I have written to DEFRA to push for immediate action and will continue to press for stronger measures to ensure residents can feel safe and enjoy their homes and neighbourhoods.

Many residents also raised concerns about local Post Office provision. In Cheswick Green, I have written to the Chief Executive of the Post Office regarding the closure and the possibility of establishing a temporary Post Office while a longer-term solution is found. I have also been engaging with Solihull Council and other local stakeholders following the closure of the Post Office in Mell Square to understand what can be done to maintain access to these important services.



These are just two examples of the issues residents have raised with me. From local planning and road quality to concerns about the green belt and employment opportunities, I will continue to listen, raise concerns with the relevant organisations and take action wherever I can.

My constituency work and parliamentary role go hand in hand. I want residents to know that when they take the time to raise an issue with me, I will do what I can to make sure their concerns are heard and, wherever possible, acted upon.

GCSE and A-Level Results Day

I was also delighted to visit Tudor Grange School on results day. We have had a brilliant set of results across Solihull West & Shirley, and it was a real pleasure to speak to some of the students as they received their results.

There was plenty of excitement as students found out how they had done and began thinking about their next steps. It was particularly encouraging to hear about the range of plans young people have for the future, whether that is university, an apprenticeship, employment, or something else entirely.

We have some exceptionally talented young people across our constituency, and I wish everyone who received their results this summer every success for the next chapter.

Charity Cricket Match

Most recently, I took part in a charity cricket match on Sunday 30th August against my fellow Solihull MP, Saqib Bhatti, at Dorridge Cricket Club. The match was held in support of the Cameron Grant Memorial Trust, which works to promote mental health and suicide prevention, particularly among young people, and to ensure that people know there is always someone they can talk to.

Roundabout

This is a cause particularly close to my heart, so I was delighted that we were able to raise £5473.00 for the Trust. It was fantastic to see so many people from across the community come along to support the event - whether to watch the cricket, enjoy the barbecue and ice cream, or simply show their support for the charity. The atmosphere throughout the afternoon was brilliant, and it was a lovely opportunity to bring people together while raising money for such an important cause.



A huge thank you to everyone who attended, donated, and helped make the day such a success. Your generosity will help the Cameron Grant Memorial Trust continue its important work, and I was very pleased that we could play our part in supporting it.

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to speak to me over the summer. Your views are essential in shaping the work I do, both here in the constituency and in Parliament.

Churchyard Tidy-up

Next churchyard Tidy-up is on Saturday 31st October. All helpers welcome.

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

7 th October	Lachrimae Consort
14 th October	Musicians from Solihull School
21 st October	Performer to be confirmed
28 th October	Performer to be confirmed

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

Shoe Aid

Trying to help to provide shoes, to people who are too poor to be able to buy shoes:-

- Children who cannot go to school, or play sports because they have no suitable shoes to wear, which often this makes them a target for ridicule or bullying. This probably affects *4m children*, taking an average across the British Isles, this equates to *4 children out of a class of 30*
- Young adults unable to go for an interview due to lack of suitable shoes
- Rough Sleepers without shoes, "Trench Foot" is now rife amongst these people

So Children's to Adult Shoes, Trainers to Formal wear, all are welcome



If you have any unwanted shoes in good condition, please contact Phil on 07770 406870, 56 Buryfield Road, Solihull, or let me know on philcgodfrey@btinternet.com



We had a splendid collection last year, when we collected in the Parish and

the Rotary Club of Solihull, a fantastic total of 200 sacks of shoes.

Can we beat this??

Please tell your friends and relations

Phil Godfrey

Kathryn Price-Feraud Wins the 2026 Westley Award for Belfry Maintenance & Improvement!

Some time ago I wrote to tell you about our then new Tower Keeper. Kathryn took on the role of looking after our bell installation with very little knowledge of bell maintenance but equipped with a huge amount of enthusiasm and a willingness to learn, she's not only become a great Tower Keeper but she's also won an award!

Kathryn has been named the winner of the 2026 Westley Award for Belfry Maintenance and Improvement, a national honour presented by the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers. The award recognises exceptional dedication to the care, maintenance, and improvement of church bells, and it's wonderful that Kathryn's contribution has been recognised.

Since stepping into the role in early 2024, Kathryn has combined her scientific precision with huge commitment, quickly becoming a trusted guardian of our 13 bells. Her work has ranged from rope splicing, assisting the foundry in large scale repairs and preparing the bells for major ringing events. She has embraced every challenge with enthusiasm, learning from the experts at Loughborough Bell Foundry and the experienced ringers



around her both here at Solihull and at other towers. She has documented work in a comprehensive Tower Keeper guide, specific to our tower, ready for future generations.

What sets Kathryn apart is not only her technical skill but her generosity in sharing it. She has involved learners, supported neighbouring towers, and championed safer working practices within the belfry. Her efforts have strengthened the ringing community and ensured the long-term health of Solihull's bells.

Her award is richly deserved, and I'm sure you'll join us in celebrating her achievement.

The View from the Tower

Annual Ringers Ramble July 2026

Following many days of heatwave, it was quite pleasing that the day of the Annual Ramble promised to be slightly cooler. After Sunday Service ringing at 11:00 a.m., most of us drove directly to The Red Lion at Claverdon for lunch at midday. We had ordered in advance, so the food arrived quickly & was delicious.

All 10 of us were ready to start walking by 1:00p.m., so after taking a group photo we set off, passing the church & heading south-west. Initially on quiet roads, we turned off towards Kington Grange then south, taking easy paths with open farmland views. After passing Cutler's Farm we continued towards Edstone, cutting left across a footbridge. Now heading east along the Monarch's Way, more field paths brought us to Langley. After a short stretch along a quiet road, we were back on delightful field paths heading north. Shortly after crossing another shady footbridge the houses of Claverdon appeared on the horizon.



We had plenty of stops along the 5-mile route for essential drinks, Jelly Tots & butterfly watching, but still arrived back at The Red Lion with time for liquid refreshments - water, tea, coffee & fruit juice were all very welcome! Then we drove straight back to St Alphege to ring again from 4:15p.m. for evensong.

A full day but everyone said how enjoyable it had been. I'm sure we all slept well that night.

Sand Cooper

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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Let us Pray

Calendar and Prayer Intentions for October

1	Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, 1885	The work of Solihull Churches' Action on Homelessness	Stoneleigh Road
2	Feria	The staff of Solihull Hospital	Stoneythorpe Close
3	George Bell, Bp of Chichester, Peacemaker, 1958	The work of Churches Together in Central Solihull	Stonor Park Road
4	St Francis of Assisi, 1226	That we may care for God's creation	Streetsbrook Road
5	Feria	The St. Alphege Prayer Group	Tanwood Close
6	William Tyndale, Bible Translator & Martyr, 1536	Those who study and translate the Bible	The Crescent
7	Feria	Those who work in the shops and restaurants of our town	The Green
8	Feria	Our Pioneer Minister, Suzette Maguire	The Hermitage
9	Robert Grosseteste, Bp of Lincoln, 1253	Our Bishops Michael & Esther	The Square
10	Thomas Traherne, Poet, Spiritual Writer, 1674	The people of St. Alphege Church	Thornby Avenue
11	19th Sunday after Trinity	Andrew and Pam, our parish wardens	Thorn Grove Avenue
12	Elizabeth Fry, Prison Reformer, 1845	Those who work in prisons & prison chaplains	Thornhill Road
13	Edward the Confessor, King of England, 1066	The MPs for Solihull Borough	Tibberton Close
14	Feria	Those who maintain our church buildings	Timmins Close
15	Teresa of Avila	Staff and pupils of St Alphege Infant & Junior Schools	Touchwood Hall Close
16	Nicholas Ridley & Hugh Latimer, Bishops & Martyrs, 1555	Those imprisoned or tortured for their faith	Union Road
17	Ignatius, Bp of Antioch, Martyr, c.107	Those being confirmed at tomorrow's confirmation service	Upwey Avenue
18	St. Luke the Evangelist	Those who work in the medical profession	Vulcan Road
19	Henry Martyn, Bible translator & Missionary	Diocesan office staff	Wadleys Road
20	Feria	Our Parish office staff	Walton Croft
21	Feria	The people of St. Helen's Church	Warmley Close
22	Feria	Our Parish Youth, Children & Families minister, Ben Yates	Warwick Grange
23	Feria	Staff, patients and volunteers of the Marie Curie hospice	Warwick Road
24	Feria	The local emergency services	Waverley Grove
25	Bible Sunday	The work of the Bible Society	Welcombe Grove
26	Cedd, Abbot of Lastingham, 664	The people of St. Michael's Church	Wellington Grove
27	Feria	The staff and children of St Alphege Pre-School	Westwood Grove
28	Simon & Jude, Apostles	Clergy, staff and congregations of the Cathedral	Wharf Lane
29	James Hannington, Bp & Martyr, 1885	Our part in God's mission to Solihull	Wherretts Well Lane
30	Feria	Staff and residents of local care homes	White Falcon Court
31	Martin Luther, Reformer, 1546	The mission and worship of our parish	White House Close

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

From the St. Alphege Register

Baptisms

16 th August	Annabelle Eliza Page
30 th August	Honey Mary Marriott
6 th September	William Arthur George Spurrier

Weddings

None

Renewal of Vows

None

Funerals

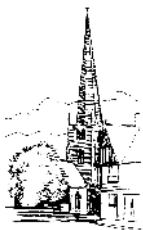
19 th August	Wendy Coles Thomas at Robin Hood Crematorium
20 th August	Valerie Hewett at St. Alphege
21 st August	Neville Ogden at Robin Hood Crematorium
2 nd September	Mary Copsey at Robin Hood Crematorium

Interment of Ashes

3 rd October	David Reginald Patterson
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Names taken from the Chantry Book for Remembrance in October 2026

Nicola Blakeman	Carl Hampson	John Daniel Mee
Peter Brotherton	Ian Herd	John Roberts
Christopher Robin Collett	Ruth Humphrey	Pat Shackleton
Margaret Fenwick	Frank Leach	Michael Simcock
Mabel Griffiths	Muriel Leach	Pamela Wright



S t A l p h e g e

Sunday 11th October

9.30 a.m. All Age Holy Communion



Live and streamed services are being held at St. Alphege's, St. Michael's and St. Helen's churches.

Details are inside the front cover of this magazine and on the Parish Website.

<https://www.solihullparish.org.uk>

Worship Notes for October 2026

This month sees the final Sunday in the season of Creationtide. The main liturgical colour is green with the exception of several important feast days where the colour is red or white.

Sunday 4th October

Today is the feast day of Saint Francis of Assisi. Let us give thanks today for his life and ministry, and remember and give thanks for the former church of St. Francis in our parish.

Tuesday 6th October

Today we remember the life and work of William Tyndale who was born in about the year 1494. This year is the 500th anniversary of Tyndale's 1526 New Testament. It was the first time the New Testament was translated from Greek and made available in English.

Saturday 10th October

Today is the feast day of the poet Thomas Traherne who lived in the middle of the 17th century. His life was illuminated by an intense vision of happiness and he communicated this joy and mystery in his extensive writings, which are works of great depth and beauty.

Thursday 15th October

The Feast Day of Teresa of Avila. Teresa lived in the 16th century. She travelled throughout Spain founding many new religious houses for men as well as women. Her writings about her own spiritual life and progress in prayer towards union with God include *The Way of Perfection* and *The Interior Castle*, which are still acclaimed.

Sunday 18th October

Feast day of St. Luke the Evangelist. Tradition says that Luke was a doctor, which has led to Luke's position as the patron saint of physicians. Today we will focus on the place of healing with the ministry of the Church.

Sunday 25th October

Many churches keep this day as Bible Sunday, an opportunity for churches to celebrate the continuing impact the Bible has on individuals and communities in the United Kingdom and throughout the world. For more information, visit:

www.biblesociety.org.uk/resources/bible-sunday

Saturday 31st October

Today is the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain (pronounced 'Sow-en'), a name which comes from the old Irish for 'Summer's End'. This festival falls just before All Saints' and All Souls' Day and, like those celebrations, Samhain is a time to remember loved ones who have died and to kindle a flame of light to guide us through the approaching dark Winter months.

This will be the focus of our Grounded Church gathering at 3 p.m. in Oak Cottage garden.

Fr. Simon

The EQUIP Festival

THE UK'S ULTIMATE CREATIVE MINISTRY CONFERENCE IS COMING TO SOLIHULL!

“Equip has changed the way I view my ministry, story telling, and everything I knew about how to share Jesus”

23rd-24th October 2026
Renewal Solihull, B91 2JR

“You will arrive, thinking you are able to do one thing, but you will leave knowing you can achieve anything!”

WHAT IS ‘THE EQUIP FESTIVAL?’

The Equip Festival is designed to inspire and equip you with creative ideas for sharing the Gospel in fun and engaging ways. Using puppets, storytelling, gospel illustrations, Drama, Science and so much more!

WHY YOU CAN'T MISS IT!

Enjoy hands-on workshops, live sessions, worship, practical training, resources, and awesome people!



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SPEAKERS



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SESSIONS



MAIN STAGE
SHOWCASES



RESOURCES
HUB

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Child and day passes also available



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TO FIND OUT MORE
& BOOK YOUR PLACE**

OR
HEAD TO EQUIPFESTIVAL.CO.UK

October 2026 Services

Thursday 1st October

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist + Prayers for Healing and Anointing
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Sunday 4th October – St Francis (Trinity 18)

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Said Eucharist
St. Alphege	9.30 a.m.	The 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

Wednesday 7th October

St. Michael	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
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Thursday 8th October

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
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Sunday 11th October – Trinity 19

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Said Eucharist
St. Alphege	9.30 a.m.	All Age Service – Pet Service and Parade 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

Wednesday 14th October

St. Michael	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
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Thursday 15th October

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
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Sunday 18th October – St Luke (Trinity 20)

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Said Eucharist + Anointing
St. Alphege	9.30 a.m.	The 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 + Anointing
St. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Confirmation Service with Bishop Esther

Wednesday 21st October

St. Michael	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
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Thursday 22nd October

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
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Sunday 25th October – Bible Sunday (Last Sunday in Trinity)

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Said Eucharist
St. Alphege	9.30 a.m.	The Journey Service
St. Helen	10.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
St. Michael	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	11:00:00	Sung Eucharist
St. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Taizé
St. Helen	5.00 p.m.	Healing Service

Wednesday 28th October

St. Michael	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
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Thursday 29th October

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
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Saturday 31st October

St. Michael	3.00 pm	Grounded Church – Samhain / All Saints
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Sunday 1st November – All Saints

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Said Eucharist
St. Alphege	9.30 a.m.	The 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.	New Door Commemoration Service

Morning Prayer

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

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

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

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



The Guardians of St Alphege Parish Church

On Wednesday 2nd September Guardians enjoyed a fundraising Coffee and Scones morning at Baddesley Clinton. Visiting local heritage sites while meeting together was a bit of an innovation. Phil Godfrey (NT volunteer) organised the event and introduced the history of the house. It was once managed by a founder St. Alphege Guardian and builder of our wooden model church, the late Roy McLeod. It proved a successful event despite a clash with an Arts Society lecture.

Our AGM on Thursday 1st October is imminent. We will report on a successful and enjoyable year. We must, however, keep moving forward and the AGM will be a chance for members to exchange views on how we plan for 2027.

On Saturday 19th September St. Alphege Church featured in Heritage Open Days. Many thanks go to our Magazine editor for leading the team here.

Upcoming Events

Thursday 1st October. 7.30 p.m.

Guardians of St. Alphege AGM. Oliver Bird Hall. 7.30 p.m.

A chance to review and plan for 2027. Refreshments will be provided. Details of the agenda and minutes from last year have been sent to members. It would help if you can let Judith j.hetherington@btinternet.com know if you can join us or are sending your apologies. We will particularly welcome the members who have joined recently.

Wednesday 9th December 12.15 p.m.

Guardians Fundraising Christmas Lunch, Drum and Monkey. 12.15 p.m.

We return to the Drum and Monkey for this popular event. This time we will be nearer Christmas and will go for traditional Christmas fare. We will have a raffle, so donations will be welcome. Judith Hetherington is kindly organising this event so to book please contact her on the e-mail above.

Other News

Our funds are there to spend. We are about to see the restoration and improvement to the church clock. The Guardians are funding much of this. Phil Godfrey has been involved. It can only be hoped that good order and efficiency across the UK will soon be enhanced.

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 September 2026 to remember the following:

1 st September	In loving memory of Tullia Agostini.
2 nd September	In loving memory of Jonathan Mark.
3 rd September	To commemorate the Diamond Wedding Anniversary of Sheila and Russell Payne
6 th September	In loving memory of Peggy Oswald.
7 th September	In loving memory of Jean McDonough on her birthday.
16 th September	In loving memory of Neil John McDonough.
18 th September	The birthday of Margaret Oswald.
23 rd September	In loving memory of Rebecca Davies.
23 rd September	In celebration of the life of John Goodman who will be so greatly missed.
25 th September	The 55 th anniversary of the marriage of Chrissie and the late dearly loved Robert Lamble
28 th September	To commemorate the birthday of the late Canon Harry Hartley.

Music Matters

September is the start of a new academic year, and we are excited to be welcoming new faces to choir this September and exploring new initiatives and developments. We are welcoming a new Senior Organ Scholar, Aaran Fleet, who will be studying at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, and also a Choral Scholar, Seren Armstrong, who sang with us in Wells during the summer.

We will be holding a recruitment event on Saturday 10th October, particularly aimed at attracting junior-school-aged children – please spread the word if you know anyone who might be interested.

We are exploring a partnership with the University of Birmingham for our recital series, as well as continuing to work with the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and Solihull School to programme musicians who will put on a recital which will be enjoyed by our audience. If you haven't been to one of our Wednesday lunchtime recitals before, why not give it a try – they are every Wednesday during termtime, with a performance start time of 1.10 p.m.,

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they are usually finished by 2 p.m., and refreshments are available beforehand, including delicious home-made cake.

We hope to have a cathedral trip lined up soon, subject to diary coordination, so look out for news of this in the Pewslip.

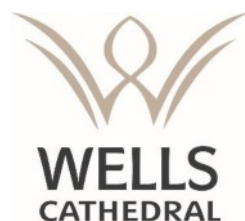
Planning is well underway for our tenth *Beer Festival* on Friday 30th and Saturday 31st October – please put the dates in your diaries now. This is an essential fundraising and outreach event, and is going from strength to strength – this year's event will be our best yet!

Isabel Baumber

Cathedral Praise for the Choir

Isabel Baumber
Parish Office
St Alphege Church
Oliver Bird Hall
Solihull

13 August 2026



Dear Isabel

St. Alphege Church Choir

I am writing on behalf of the Chapter here at Wells Cathedral to thank you and your choir for coming to sing at the Cathedral. We know that much care and preparation went on before and during your visit, and we are very grateful.

Thousands of people come here for sung services each year, and music helps lift their souls and spirits. Thank you, therefore, for playing your part in that ministry of inspiration.

I am very sorry that I personally missed most of your week in residence, but from what others have shared with me, I know how much your contribution was appreciated, and what I saw and heard of you on Sunday confirmed that for me – I am a huge fan of Stanford, and was so pleased that at the one Evensong I was there for, I was treated to such a strong rendition of For Lo, I raise up!

I hope that you had a good journey home, and do please be in touch with Melanie Lawlor in the Music Office here if you would like to arrange a future visit.

With very best wishes and thanks,

The Reverend Canon Timothy Stevens
Precentor



CHORISTER EXPERIENCE DAY

Saturday 10 October
2pm to 5pm

ST ALPHEGE CHURCH,
SOLIHULL, B91 3RQ

- ✓ Singing
- ✓ Music theory
- ✓ Games
- ✓ Make friends and have fun!

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st-alphege-choirs](http://www.solihullparish.org.uk/st-alphege-choirs)

REGISTER NOW





What's on for Families?

October

In The Week



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



Friday 16th , 4-6pm, £2.50 per person (£10 max)
St Helens Church, Solihull



Youth Club

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

Sundays



Sunday 4th, Sunday 20th, Sunday 18th, Sunday 25th
October

All at 9.30am at St Alphege Church, Church Hill,
B91 3RT



All Age Worship

Sunday 11th October - 9.30am

St Alphege Church, Church Hill, B91 3RT

AGE 5+

Crafternoons

HOLIDAY CRAFT CLUB

£5 PER DAY

EASTER - SUMMER - CHRISTMAS

Book your place @ childrensministry@solihullparish.org.uk

**DROP OFF FROM 1PM
COLLECTION UNTIL 4PM**

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CHURCH HILL
B91 3RT





October

Messy Church

This month our theme will be...

Tell - Share the story

**Come along for some afterschool fun.
As always we will have lots of crafts,
fun active challenges, worship time
and dinner for everyone!**

Suitable for ages 3+

Friday 16th October
4 - 6pm

St Helens Church

£2.50 per person, max £10 per family

Parents / Carers should stay for the session

Booking is essential!

Email: Childrensministry@solihullparish.org.uk





November

Messy Church

This November Messy Church will be in

St Alphege Church

**As always we will have lots of crafts,
fun active challenges, worship time
and dinner for everyone!**

Suitable for ages 3+

Friday 20th November

4 - 6pm

St Alphege Church

£2.50 per person, max £10 per family

Parents / Carers should stay for the session

Booking is essential!

Email: Childrensministry@solihullparish.org.uk



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.

St. Helen's Christmas Fayre

Appeal for Support and Donations

St. Helen's Church will be holding its annual Christmas Fayre on Saturday 28th November from 11.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. as part of our ongoing commitment to welcome you and the wider community to support local charitable work.

This year the Fayre will be raising funds for two charities within the Solihull area.

Proceeds will go to **AFIA** (Away from it All) a Mothers' Union project which provides respite breaks for families in need and **Troop Aid** which supports injured service personnel.

In preparation for the event, we warmly invite donations of;

- Raffle and Tombola Prizes i.e. bottles alcoholic and non alcoholic and chocolates.
- Cakes – Preserves – Toys – Books – Jigsaws.
- Decorative Boxes (shoe size or smaller).
- Financial donations are also welcome.

Collection boxes for donations will be available in St. Helen's Church every Sunday morning from mid-September.

For all enquiries please contact Julie and Mark Norman
mobile 07974 587508 or email sthelenschristmasfayre@gmail.com

Thank you for helping us bless our community and support these wonderful charities.

As I write this article for October, I am reflecting on the events of August and looking forward to October and realising that September's events will have already occurred when this is published. August at St. Helen's is a time for getting things done. The building is in almost constant use for the rest of the year and August is the best time to get those jobs done. We have had our boilers and our furnace for the warm air in the main hall serviced, redone car park markings, fixed the concertina partitions in the main hall which had come adrift from their runners, repainted parts of the Chapel which had deteriorated badly and replaced our 25-year-old hob in the kitchen with a brand new one to aid our cooks in preparing the regular Wednesday lunches and other events.

The Montessori Ladybird school is now getting well-established and we expect an increased intake for this term. We are developing a good working relationship with the staff. Montessori actually operate throughout the year and the only time they don't come in is bank holidays and there were a few days in the summer when it was too hot to operate.

August is also the time when we enjoy our joint fellowship with St. Michael's. As the psalmist wrote: "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore." This joint fellowship was enjoyed for our two churches in all our services in August and we would like to thank St. Michael's for their fellowship and the contribution they made to these joint services.

September, of course, is the month when everything starts up again. Our Homegroup has started again doing studies on the Holy Spirit. Also starting up again are Wednesday Lunches and Second Wednesday coffee and cake, Messy Church, Lydia, Cameo, Solihull Young Dancers, Tumbletots, art groups, Guides and Brownies and others contributing to a high percentage of use of our facilities. We thank Jeremy Eade for all his work in coordinating the use of our buildings.

On September 26th we will have had our Harvest Supper, another opportunity for fellowship and an opportunity to invite friends, family and neighbours to enjoy this with us.

At St. Helen's we continue to support, in prayer and financially, Nicci Maxwell, our Church Missionary Society partner currently undertaking paediatric and neonatal care to local and refugee communities and training and supporting local paediatric teams in Juba, the capital of South Sudan. We look forward to welcoming Nicci to our service on 1st November.

Our Christmas Fayre this year will take place on Saturday 28th November and again we invite friends, neighbours, family and our brothers and sisters from our other churches to join us at this joyous occasion, all the time raising funds for local charities. A flier advertising this event has been included in this edition of the Parish News.

Les Prescott

St Helen's Christmas Fayre



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SATURDAY
November 28th
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★ **RAFFLE**

★ **FUN GAMES**

★ **TOMBOLA**

★ **CAKES & PRESERVES**



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AFIA MOTHERS'
UNION
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AWAY FROM IT ALL
*Funding Family Seaside
Holidays and Day Trips*

Coming Home Again

Returning to Our Shared Place - a glance back

September has a particular feeling about it. The summer holidays are over, the children are returning to school, and gradually the familiar routines of everyday life begin again. For us, there is another return to mark – our return to worshipping in the school after the break in August.

During August, when the school is unavailable, some of us have taken the opportunity to worship at one of the other churches in our parish, or even further afield. It has been good to be welcomed by our fellow Christians, and perhaps it has reminded us that although we may worship in different places and in slightly different ways, we are all part of the same church family.

But there is also something rather special about coming back together again.

The school may not be the most traditional of church buildings, but over time it has become *our* place. We know where everything goes, we recognise the familiar faces and there is something comforting about gathering there once more. It is a place where worship happens, where friendships have grown and where, week by week, we meet as a community.

Gathered at the Eucharist

And as we returned to our usual pattern of worship, we returned to the **Eucharist**.

There is something wonderfully appropriate about that too. At the Eucharist we gather, bringing all that we have experienced during the summer – the good things, the difficult things, the people we have met and the places we have been. We bring our lives to God and receive again the gifts of bread and wine.

Those simple things remind us of God's creation: wheat grown in the earth, grapes from the vine, the work of human hands and the generosity of God. In the Eucharist, the ordinary things of life become part of our worship and our thanksgiving.

So perhaps our return to the school is not simply a return to “normal”. It is an opportunity to begin again.

We come back together. We renew old friendships. We welcome anyone who may be joining us for the first time. We give thanks for the summer and for the beauty of God's world. And around the Eucharistic table we are reminded once more that we are part of something much bigger than ourselves – a community gathered by Christ and sent out to share his love in the world.

And perhaps, as we settle back into our familiar places this September, we might take a moment to be grateful – grateful for one another, grateful for the world around us and, above all, grateful that wherever and however we meet, **God is with us**.

There is something rather lovely about coming home.

Dates for Your Diary

Please remember that we celebrate Harvest Thanksgiving during October. Our regular Chapel Chat is on Thursday 1st October at 2 p.m. in St. Michael's Chapel.

Paul Smith



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OR at: <https://tinyurl.com/quizzicaleve>



"See, I am doing a new thing!"

I had my shopping delivered today.

It's not something that I have always done, but it came in very handy when I had a badly sprained ankle earlier this year and couldn't get to the shops. I've carried on doing it occasionally.

I've been reflecting on my pioneer ministry in the parish also recently and that, plus the shopping delivery, made me stop and think.

Tesco (*other supermarkets are available*) was founded in 1919 by Jack Cohen, a World-War-One soldier, when he started selling surplus groceries from a market stall in the East End of London. The name Tesco arrived in 1924, and the first official store under the Tesco name opened in 1929 in Burnt Oak, Edgware, North London.

The first Tesco supermarket opened in 1956 and now, seventy years on, we have such things as 'Tesco Whoosh', where shoppers can get everyday essentials in as little as 20 minutes. I'm sure you'll agree that that's a long way from Jack Cohen's original London market stall.

So, what's this got to do with us, I hear you ask.

Well, if we look at evangelism and the church, the most popular and effective way to get new people into a church or to a church-related event is through a personal invitation from a friend, family member, neighbour, or co-worker. In fact, research by Church growth expert Thom Rainer in "*The Unchurched Next Door*" shows that 82% of unchurched people are likely to attend church if they are personally invited by something they know and trust. This has been the case for many years and remains so today.

So, who do we know and where do we meet them? In a society where people can shop without leaving the house; where they might live miles away from family; and they might increasingly work from home; where and when do these opportunities for a personal invitation come?

I see it as a part of my role, both as evangelist and Pioneer Minister, to, when necessary, model turning the church 'norms' on their head. What that means in practice is that, instead of sitting in church, with an ever-dwindling pool of people to invite to church, I model going out into the local community, making those relationships, meeting people in their situation and at their point of need.

Before you dismiss my words as '*that's her job, she's paid to do it*', I need to point out that the Parish Vision Statement was established by you all before I arrived on the scene in 2019. For those who need a reminder, the vision statement for our parish is – *Growing Disciples, Building Community, Transforming Lives*. As I said, I wasn't working here when the parish adopted that vision statement, so I'm never sure if it was meant to be read 'in order' of what our vision should look like. For me, I prefer *Transforming Lives, Building Community, Growing Disciples*.

The work that I do in the local community is transforming lives. E.g. *"Creating an atmosphere where the group can share our worries, support each other, talk about what is happening within the community, and look forward to the future."* (G)

It is also building community. E.g.: *"Thanks for another fun morning. I feel so lucky to have good times with lovely folks."* (M) Wellbeing Wednesday has *"grown into a family"*, relied on for *"our mental health and our happiness"* (G). And, more latterly, through Prayer Quarter and Food4Thought it is beginning to grow disciples, not the least of which is that one of our number (Theresa) was confirmed last October. Congratulations again to her.

Unfortunately, the numbers of people prepared to invite people to church don't mirror those willing to accept an invitation. According to invitewelcomeconnect.com, when asked 27% of people said that they didn't invite anyone as they didn't know who to ask.

This is where you and I come in.

We need to be out in the community, meeting people, and building up genuine relationships, not to 'Bible-bash' anyone, but to issue invitations to people within a relationship of trust. And if we're thinking that that's 'outside the box' and a bit worrying, it's even more worrying to think that there are whole communities out there whose lives would benefit from a relationship with Jesus, but they haven't had the opportunity to hear about him, never mind meet him. We can but try!

Finally, I don't know what Tesco founder Jack Cohen would think of Tesco 'Whoosh', but I'm sure he'd applaud the willingness to change that has kept his creation alive for over 100 years. That willingness to change is something that we also should embrace, both for ourselves and for our communities. As the prophet Isaiah reminds us of God's declaration: *"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."*

Amen to that!

Thanks for listening!

Suzette

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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The Parishioner and the Bee

It was when the vicar invited all to sit or kneel for prayer, that the Parishioner heard the buzzing, like the drone of a distant plane high in the sky.

Prayers were being recited, but he could not focus, as his eyes kept scanning the pews and arched stained glass windows for the source of the sound.

Then the Parishioner saw it, the rotund black and yellow furry Bumblebee, hovering along the dim aisle next to him. Then it circled back up the aisle and the droning receded.

'No sunshine for you here Mr. Bumble Bee, and there are no flowers for you either' he thought, seeing the ancient doors on the far side of the church, wide open on this hot, windless, Summer's day, through which the creature must have inadvertently flown.

Prayers continued at the altar, but the Parishioner had long given up trying to follow the thread of them, his mind fixated on working out a rescue plan for the poor insect.

Along the walls were birthday cards for sale on an oak cabinet in little boxes. 'Wonder if I empty one of those boxes and use it to trap Mr Bumble Bee...then I could take it out of the church without causing a fuss' he thought.

But just then the Bumblebee, frustrated at the seeming dead end of the gloomy aisle and finding no escape, climbed high and disappeared into the darkness of the high church rafters.

The sight and sound of the little creature altogether ceased, and with that the Parishioner sighed with relief...'Perhaps it will find the church doors then and see itself out'. Now managing to latch back onto the tail end of the prayers, he mumbled with the rest of the congregation '...and may they rest in peace, and rise in glory, Amen'.

But as the service progressed to the Bread and the Wine, the buzzing Bumblebee reappeared at the aisle, and the Parishioner watched it settle on the ancient, cold, stone slabs, exhausted. Then it disappeared under the birthday card cabinet.

Now he determined, as soon as the Bread and the Wine was given, he would empty the birthday card box to rescue Mr. Bumble Bee.

The pews were set in ranks, and his was near the back...but each parishioner had to go decently and in order. first rank first, second rank second etc.

'Come on, come on' he muttered...he knew where the Bumblebee was now so he could rescue it, but the longer it took, the more likely it would take flight again.

Like a Formula 1 car revving to take off, the Parishioner watched as the ranks of parishioners went up for communion...at last his pew was given the nod and at that, instead of heading for the Bread and the Wine, he darted in the opposite direction...grabbed a box and emptied it of cards, then bent down to look into the murky depths at the bottom of cabinet.

'So that's why you did not come out' he whispered as he saw the Bumblebee twisting and wreathing shrouded in a thick grey web.

Without delay, and not caring whether he got stung, he scooped up the insect, web and all, into the box...he noticed the buzzing went up a notch, guessing that Mr. Bumble Bee was now annoyed.

With the Bumblebee in the box and his hand over the top to prevent it flying out, he half ran, half walked, dodging startled parishioners, and got out the church doors into the blazing sunshine.

The Bumblebee was still wrestling with the web, like a fish caught in a net, so the Parishioner gently pulled the grey threads away from the black and yellow fur. Then free of most of the web shroud, he watched it at the bottom of the box, willing its wings to start fluttering. But its movements slowed, then stopped. He picked the little ball of fur up and blew on it, hoping some breath of life would waken it, but its limbs were still with not a flicker of movement.

Martin, the clergy assistant, nodded his head and smiled again, still looking a little worried.

"Never mind" the Parishioner said beaming, shaking Martin's hand vigorously as there was a black and yellow flash, and a buzz, past his face, "have a wonderful day".

As the Parishioner walked home, if he'd been younger, he'd have done a little Morecambe and Wise skip in the air with the click of his heels.

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News from the Church of England

Voting for the new, five-year session of the General Synod of the Church of England is currently underway. This might be an appropriate time to remind ourselves of the history of the General Synod as well as its role and function.

Before 1919, changes to the Church's worship or governance required an Act of Parliament. This meant that little was ever achieved. The Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act of 1919 created the Church Assembly and gave it power to prepare measures which, once approved by Parliament, had the same force and effect of an Act of Parliament. Parliamentary approval was achieved by a special committee of members of both houses of parliament.

By a Synodical Measure of 1969, the Church Assembly renamed and reconstituted itself as the General Synod of the Church of England. This took over almost all the powers of the former Convocations.

General Synod consists of three houses. The House of Bishops is made up of thirty Bishops from the Province of Canterbury and twelve from the Province of York.

The House of Clergy is rather more complicated. It has 128 members from Canterbury Province, and 54 from York. In addition, there are four representatives from Universities and Theological Colleges, six Cathedral Deans, three chaplains from the armed forces, the Chaplain-General of Prisons and two representatives from religious communities.

The third house, the House of Laity, has 170 members from Canterbury and 80 from York. Additional members are the Dean of the Arches, the Vicars-General of both provinces, the three Church Estate Commissioners, the chairs of the Central Boards of Finance and the Church of England Pensions board, and communicant members of the Archbishop's Council. Thus, there are a total of 467 members.

Synod meets two or three times each year, and each meeting extends over four or five days. These meetings are held in Church House, Westminster (one or two per year) and at the University of York. Sessions are officially opened by the monarch and jointly presided over by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

General Synod performs a range of duties. These include preparing and debating legislation concerning the governance of the Church of England, passing canons and determining the doctrine and forms of worship. Synod approves changes to liturgy, regulates relations with other churches, and approves the annual budget of the Church. At times synod may consider and express an opinion on other matters of religious or public interest.

Measures or canons are passed by a majority of members in all three houses. However, some changes to rites, doctrine and ceremonies can only be authorised by the House of Bishops. Some measures require consideration and approval by Diocesan synods. Interestingly, some measures cannot apply in the Diocese of Sodor and Man without approval by Tynwald, the Isle of Man parliament.

Elected members of the House of Laity are chosen by lay members of Deanery Synods. These are elected by lay attendees at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, in other words

by you if your name is on the Parish Electoral Role. This is therefore a reminder of the importance of attending this meeting which is held in the Spring of each year.

The results of the elections to Synod will be announced in October. Please pray for candidates for election and continue to hold Synod Members in your prayers throughout the year, especially at times when Synod is in session.

Fr. Roy

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Update from the Parish Wardens

In June we were sorry to say goodbye to **Geraldine and Sherwood Burge** who have been members of our congregations for so many years and contributed so much. St. Michael's gave them a parting gift of an Icon shown here. The Ladies Choir presented Geraldine with a photo album of all their fun times singing together in many varied places.



At the end of last term **Solihull Parish Youth Club** had a go at **handbell change ringing** which is good fun but difficult, yet they succeeded in the end! Sand Cooper led us through it and you can see the team here. Do hold Ben Yates, Lynn Smart, and Tammy Strong, our Children and Youth Staff, and our many volunteers, in your prayers as they serve us in this way.



We are pleased to report that the faculty for **Project Turnaround** has been granted. The next stage will be working out how to raise the money for us to enable all the wonderful plans to come to fruition.

The **Parish Away Day** at Newlands Bishop Farm was a huge success and greatly enjoyed. Over 130 people of all ages attended from all three church centres and Suzette's *Food for Thought* group.

Enormous thanks are due to Ben Yates for his excellent organization, and to Becky and all the volunteers who ably assisted.

Our **St. Alphege Schools** do a wonderful service for young people and their parents and we do pray for them as they go through their new year with a new Headteacher – Mark Carr.

We have another **Men's Breakfast** on 3rd October where we welcome **Paul Nelson**, Pastor of Gas Street South Church, as our speaker. Please book in if you have not done so – arwilliams399@gmail.com It will be good to hear about his life and about Gas Street South.

In the middle of the month we have our **Confirmation Service**. Some from our Alpha and 321 courses will be going on to Baptism and Confirmation with Bishop Esther at St. Alphege Church, at 5.00 p.m. on Sunday 18th October. We expect also to be joined by others from our Deanery. Do make a date and come and support the candidates and enjoy a wonderful service where people make a public commitment to our Lord.

We do have lots of **attractive services and activities** to which we could **invite people**. Please do encourage your friends and neighbours as it would be so good to welcome more people to faith and into our fellowships.

Please keep praying for all that is going on in the Parish and thank you for all your work and support.

**Pam Price
Andrew Williams
Parish Wardens**



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Matters of Faith

Seeing in the Dark

"The nights are drawing in," used to be a constant refrain in telephone conversations with my late Mum at this time of year. Clocks go back, sunset gets earlier and earlier as we approach mid-December. I also call to mind the opening words of Paul Simon's song *Sound of Silence*.

"Hello darkness my old friend."

However, darkness is often seen as anything but our friend. Evil deeds are done under cover of darkness, world news is full of events and issues such as war, poverty, climate uncertainty, economic problems and crime which may make us feel we are in a dark period and a dark place. This time of year is a problem for many who suffer from SAD, Seasonal Affective Disorder. Loneliness, depression, anxiety and grief bring darkness into many lives.

The Scriptures assure us of both the reality of darkness but also the power of light to overcome it. Jesus describes himself as the Light of the World, Psalm 23 memorably assures us that even though we walk through the valley of darkness God is with us.

Can we find anything positive as we think of darkness? This season maybe gives us more time to rest and sleep, seeds are germinating underground in the dark, babies develop in the darkness of the womb. Darkness then, maybe is something where growth can occur rather than it being a state to make us fear. In darker nights the beauty of the stars can be appreciated and we enjoy Christmas decorations. As we approach Advent, darker days perhaps invite us to wait and trust and grasp the reality that the dawn often comes gradually rather than instantly.

Lighting a small candle in a dark room has great impact and is a familiar truth. Our seemingly small acts can also be a small candle flame to bring light to someone else's dark place. Lighten up someone's life with a smile, a phone call, a visit.

Some times can be very dark indeed. If you go underground in caverns such as can be found in the Peak District, if someone turns off the lights you can experience total darkness. In those conditions with absolutely no light at all you cannot even see your hands in front of your face. Psalm 88 is frankly honest in acknowledging times where there seems to be no comfort at all, ending with the words that darkness is the only companion. Despite its unrelenting gloom, at least the gloom is brought to God. Psalm 139 brings the reassurance that even darkness is not dark to God.

Finally, we may know individuals and also accept ourselves that often we are in the dark about the reality of God. The existence of a God of love is often open to debate. As believers there seems to be no cast iron verifiable truth either way. It's frustrating that in daily life and the world around us that God doesn't make himself more obvious. In a recent book *Blaise Pascal: the Man who made the Modern World* by the former Bishop of Kensington, Graham Tomlin, he explains that the 17th Century philosopher Blaise Pascal proposes the argument that the apparent hiddenness of God is a positive, not negative thing. He argues that God is not just an object to be examined, instead he actually refuses to be pinned down by something we call "proof". Although apparently hidden, he waits to be found. He encourages seekers but distances himself from those who lay down conditions. Pascal wrote:

"He hides himself from those who test him and he reveals himself to those who seek him."

May these darker days give us opportunity to bring light to others and be days of discovery of more of God's love and light.

God Bless.
Revd. Roger



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Thursday 1st October : 1.30pm in the OBH. *Dear Elizabeth* - a talk by Mary Bodfish about the early life of the Queen Mother.

Thursday 15th October : 10.30am in church. *MU Corporate Eucharist*.

Thursday 5th November : 1.30pm in the OBH. *Newlands Bishop Farm* - a talk by Jane Hunt.

Thursday 19th November : 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 monthly Wives Lunch Club will meet on Friday 2nd October. If you would like to attend this friendly meal, please contact Carol Caldicott by phone, as below.

Carol Caldicott
0121 705 3168

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

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