SOLIHULL PARISH NEWS



No. 583 NOVEMBER 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 8th November 9.30 a.m. Parish Eucharist for all ages
Sunday 1st, & 15th November 11.00 a.m. Choral Eucharist
5.00 p.m. Evensong, except:
Sunday 15th November 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 1st, 15th, 22nd, 29th, 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

Solihull War Memorial

outside St. Alphege Church

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Editorial

The poet, publisher, and humourist Thomas Hood (1799 – 1845) was obviously not fond of this, the penultimate month of the year. He wrote a poem about it which contains the following lines:

No sun – no moon! No morn – no noon – no dawn – no dusk – no proper time of day.
No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease, no comfortable feel in any member –
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees, no fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds!
November.

We live in the northern hemisphere, far away from the tropical regions nearer to the equator. We know that this far North November weather can be dank and dreary. November is the month in which the mellow fruitfulness and celebrations of autumn begin to give way to the cold, grey skies and mists of winter. The nights grow longer, the trees grow bare and the whole earth seems to be dying.

This is all part of God's plan for his creation. In the account of creation at the beginning of the book of Genesis we read that God hallowed one day each week, the seventh day which he he called the sabbath, to be a day of rest. This idea of regular periods of rest is developed further in Leviticus. Here, God requires a sabbatical year. Every seven years the fields are left fallow, that is they are not ploughed. No grain is sown and the people just gather whatever food the soil produces itself.

There is a further rest demanded after seven cycles of seven years. The year after the seventh sabbatical year, the fiftieth year, is the Jubilee Year. The Jubilee Year is treated like the other sabbatical years, and the land remains fallow. The Jubilee Year also imposes certain rules concerning property. The people were expected to return to their own property and, significantly, all unpaid debts were cancelled.

So the Bible clearly indicates to us that God's plan is for regular periods of rest. Rest for the land and rest for we human beings. There should be rest one day in seven days, one year in seven years and an extra year at the end of every seven cycles of seven years.

God's plan doesn't end there. The four seasons of the year give times for ploughing and planting, for growth, for maturity and harvest, and finally for a dormant period of rest. Modern research and farming practice is beginning to show that God's way is the right way. When we work with nature the yields increase.

November has a special feel about it. There is quietness as we watch the land dying back and many animals begin their winter hibernation. The days grow shorter and the sun rests nearer to the horizon. It is perhaps unsurprising that the church chooses November to set aside two days for us to remember with love and gratitude those who have gone before us: All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day. It is a period of quietness, yes. But it is also a period of quiet expectation and hopefulness. Winter may be on its way: but winter is always followed by spring.

So please take time to enjoy these special qualities offered by the quietness of November. Pray for those who work on the land, for friends and family who have died but remain in our hearts. Thank God for periods of resting. Thank God for November.

Fr. Roy

SCAH

Providing practical help for people in need across the Solihull Borough

CAN YOU HELP SCAH KEEP SAYING YES?

NOVEMBER – MONTH OF ACTION

DONATE

Help provide essential Home Starter Packs for people in need across Solihull.

VOLUNTEER

Be a shopper – just 3–4 shops a month can make a real difference.



Find out more at **www.scah.org.uk**

"Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor. Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear..."

Isaiah 58:7

SCAH

Helping people make a house a home.

Registered Charity No. 1058279

Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness

Providing practical help for people in need across the Solihull Borough

"Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor. Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear…"
Isaiah 58:7

NOVEMBER – OUR MONTH OF ACTION

THIS YEAR, WE URGENTLY NEED YOUR HELP

By the end of August 2026, SCAH had already provided support to 150 adults and 74 associated children.

For the past few years, November has been SCAH's Month of Action – an opportunity for our Christian community to come together and help us continue providing practical support to people in need across the Solihull Borough.

We are immensely grateful for the generosity and support we receive from local churches throughout the year. **This year, however, our Month of Action is particularly important.**

SCAH's financial position is now a serious concern

Our Treasurer has recently completed a detailed analysis of SCAH's finances and prepared a financial forecast for the months ahead.

We currently have several grant applications pending. Unless at least a couple of these are successful, our financial projections indicate that SCAH could run out of funds in early 2027.

The Reserves Dilemma

Grant-making organisations generally want to see reserves equivalent to around six to nine months of expenditure. However, some meet irregularly and decisions can take months. If our reserves fall too low, particularly below around three months of expenditure, some funders may regard us as financially vulnerable and be less willing to support us.

We need grant funding to maintain our reserves – but we need sufficient reserves to be in the strongest position to obtain grant funding.

This is why your support during our November Month of Action is so important.

Every donation helps strengthen our financial position and gives us more time to secure the grant funding we need to continue.

Why does SCAH need to continue?

The number of people needing our help does not seem to be diminishing. Our volunteer shoppers individually put together Home Starter Packs containing the small but essential household items many of us take for granted – bedding, towels, kitchen equipment, cleaning products, toiletries and small electrical items.

For someone who has experienced homelessness in whatever form – including domestic abuse, leaving care or prison, or being a young care leaver – these simple things can make an enormous difference when starting again.

So how can you help this November?

1. Please Donate

A donation of £5, £10, £20 – or whatever you are able to give – will help us continue providing Starter Packs and maintain the reserves we need while we await grant decisions.

www.scah.org.uk

Go to 'Fundraising and Donors' and click on the CAF Donate button.

2. We Urgently Need More Volunteer Shoppers

Our shoppers purchase the required items and the completed pack is delivered to or collected by the referrer.

It is flexible: a shopper may be asked to shop three or four times a month, depending on referrals and availability.

- A car and ability to lift and carry a typical supermarket shop
- Access to a computer and regular email
- A willingness to give some of your time

Training and support are provided, and shopping costs are reimbursed without delay.

This November, Please Take Action

Donate – Help us maintain the financial stability we need to continue our work and secure future funding.

Volunteer – Become one of our much-needed shoppers.

Share – Tell others about SCAH and the work we do across our local community.

We want to be here to help the next person who needs us.
With your help, we can be.

Thank you for continuing to put faith into action and for helping us support people in need across our local community.

SCAH – helping people make a house a home.

SCAH Registered Charity No. 1058279

The People's Emergency Briefing



Did you know that more than eight out of ten people want our government to do more to protect climate and nature? Yet governments consistently underestimate the popularity of climate-and-nature friendly laws.

In November 2025, more than 1,200 MPs, peers and leaders from business, culture, faith, sport and the media gathered at Westminster Central Hall for a landmark National Briefing delivered by leading UK experts. The event opened with broadcaster Chris Packham, who called for clear public understanding of the risks facing the UK. Experts addressed the implications of climate and nature breakdown for food security, health, national security, infrastructure and the economy, alongside practical evidence on how risks can still be reduced.

Following this National Briefing, a 50-minute film **The People's Emergency Briefing** has been created. It aims to inform people about the climate and nature crisis while at the same time giving us agency to respond, grasping the opportunities that this crisis represents, and giving our government the mandate to act.

Chris Packham has said, "*I'd encourage people everywhere to attend a screening of The People's Emergency Briefing. It creates exactly the kind of honest local conversation we now urgently need, both about what these changes mean where we live, and about what we can do together to address them.*"

The film is followed by a facilitated and friendly discussion over tea and biscuits on the implications and opportunities for us locally.

Solihull Parish are hosting two screenings of **The People's Emergency Briefing** to allow both daytime *or* evening attendance.

Each event should last under 2 hours and refreshments will be served.

- **St Alphege Church**
- **Monday 16th November 2026 - 7.15 p.m.** (entrance available from 6.50 p.m.) and
- **Tuesday 17th November 2026 – 10.15 a.m.** (entrance available from 9.50 a.m.)

Booking isn't necessary and everyone is invited to attend, including our community, faith and educational leaders. Invitations have also been extended to Meriden and Solihull East MP, Saqib Bhatti and Solihull West and Shirley MP, Neil Shastri-Hurst as well as Solihull's Mayor, Sardul Singh Marwa, the Leader of Solihull Council, Karen Grinsell, and Councillor Andy Mackiewicz, who is Cabinet Portfolio holder for Climate Change and Planning, along with councillors from all Solihull Wards.

We all need to be part of this national effort to respond appropriately to the climate and nature crisis with both urgency and hope. All are welcome, whatever your starting point or

previous view – let's get together as a community, face up to the problem and discuss solutions together over tea and biscuits (and possibly cake!).

The National Emergency Briefing is supported by organisations across conservation, education, faith and civil society, including the Church of England, WWF, the National Trust, CPRE and the Royal Meteorological Society.

The Social and Environmental Justice Committee

Supported by:

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND Environment Programme · THE SALVATION ARMY · CAFOD A better world needs all of us · tearfund · Public Issues · A ROCHA · LAUDATO SI' MOVEMENT · GreenChristian · Christian Climate Action · eco congregation Scotland · OPERATION NOAH

Morris Dancers Attend Baptism

The Baptism of Wiliam Arthur George Spurrier was attended not only by his parents, godparents, family and friends but also by some Morris dancers – and the family





greyhound. The dancers, all in costume, were, like William's father, members of Jockey Morris, a Morris side based in Birmingham since their formation in 1949. After the service the dancers donned their flower-bedecked hats and performed outside the church to the delight of the congregation and surprise of passers-by.

Christmas Island Experiences



On Thursday 5th November, the Mothers' Union meeting at 1.30pm in the OBH will welcome Derek Woolf, a former Air Force officer who witnessed the nuclear testing during the Cold War. In 1957 – as an 18 year old airman – he was sent, along with hundreds of other young servicemen, to Christmas Island in the Pacific to participate in Britain's nuclear test series which included the detonation of the two largest hydrogen bombs that Britain had ever tested.

Now aged 87, Derek believes it is important that – whilst they will inevitably form their own opinions on the rights or wrongs of nuclear weapons – people of today should be informed of how our country's ultimate deterrent was shaped.

This is an open meeting and everyone is 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

4th November	Darren Hogg, organ
11th November	Thomas Baumber, baritone
18th November	Harry Brown, organ
25th November	Musicians from Solihull School

Global 16 Days of Activism

Against Gender-Based Violence 25th November 10th December

25th November - December Mothers' Union continues to support the **Global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence** 25th November – 10th December in addition to their **No More 1 in 3 Campaign.** These campaigns highlight and raise awareness that 1 in 3 women worldwide have been subjected to either physical and /or sexual violence in their lifetime. Mothers' Union will be showing the **Souls of our Shoes** exhibition in this parish in November or December to shine a spotlight on the voices of those who have walked away from domestic abuse and those who walk the journey with them.



Soroptomist International Solihull are showing the film *"It Ends with Us"* to mark the start of the 16 Days of Activism at The Core Theatre.

For more information please contact Elaine Diskin elainediskin@hotmail.co.uk

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

A Report from Dr. Neil Shastri-Hurst M.P.

Over the past month, I have continued to be busy across Solihull West & Shirley meeting residents, visiting businesses, and supporting opportunities for young people across our constituency.

Annual Jobs Fayre



On 25th September, I was delighted to host my annual Jobs Fayre at Solihull College and University Centre. The event was an enormous success with over 200 people attending to speak with a range of companies and organisations offering a variety of different career paths.

Fayres such as this are an excellent opportunity for young people to find out more about the opportunities available to them locally, by speaking directly with employers and asking questions about what skills and experiences they need. It was wonderful to see so many students engaging with prospective employers and showing a genuine interest in what was on offer.

I would like to thank Solihull College and University for playing host, along with all the businesses and organisations who gave up their time and contributed to the success of the day.

Christmas Card Competition

I have recently launched my annual Christmas Card Competition for primary schools across Solihull West & Shirley. The winning student's design will be used for my Christmas card to the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the House of Commons, Members of Parliament, and Councillors, along with a wide range of people and organisations across Solihull West & Shirley and Westminster.

I always look forward to seeing the creativity of pupils and the fantastic array of art they submit. If you, or someone you know, would like to enter my competition, please do head over to my website where you can find the template for your design to be drawn on. I look forward to seeing what you come up with!

Local Business and Organisation Visits

I have continued to make time to visit businesses and organisations across the constituency. These visits are an integral part of my work as an M.P., giving me the opportunity to hear directly from organisations about their work and what matters to them most.

At the start of September, I visited Cornerways in Olton to see the progress being made on the community garden. Friends of Cornerways was established earlier this year to transform the gardens into a more accessible and welcoming space for residents. It was great to see all the work that has gone into transforming the garden and the difference the project is already making. What was previously an overgrown and underused space is being turned into an area that residents can enjoy and take pride in, supporting their health and wellbeing.



As part of National Manufacturing Day, I visited Jaguar Land Rover's Solihull Plant alongside a group of students; we toured the production line and heard about the advancements JLR has made within the manufacturing sector in recent years. It was really encouraging to see young people taking an interest in careers in the manufacturing sector and have JLR showcase all the brilliant opportunities available.

Last month, I also visited Malvern and Brueton Parks to meet with representatives from Green Flag and Solihull Council and hear about the excellent work being done to maintain and improve our parks and green spaces. Solihull Borough now has 21 Green Flags, the most in the West Midlands, which is a fantastic achievement and something everyone in the community can be proud of. Our green spaces are a central part of what makes Solihull such a pleasing place to live and it was wonderful to recognise the effort that goes into maintaining these spaces.



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

And the Winners Are!

The icing on the cake for the Robert B. Smith Trophy striking competition, held at St. Alphege Church on 26th September, came when Revd. Nick presented the trophy to the Birmingham Cathedral band. This beautifully topped off what was a very special day. The Higher Numbers band, that ring with us just once a month, came 6th of 8 teams. This too was a huge success as they don't regularly ring together and some of them don't often ring on 12 bells. A very respectable result and one they were rightly proud of. The judges' critique for each band included valuable feedback laced with good humour. They'd been hidden away all day, out of sight but not out of mind. We'd delivered drinks throughout and they thanked us for the quality of their packed lunch which had included bags of Maltesers!



The Rector presented the trophy to Tony Daw the lead Birmingham Cathedral ringer, alongside the judges for the day.



The local band that practice here at Solihull



Team Draw – names are taken from the bell to decide the running order for the competition.

Our successes came in many ways. We received so much positive feedback. The organisation seemed to go so well and even as little issues arose, they were quickly and calmly resolved. We sold out of bacon baps at breakfast, burgers at lunch time, and beer and cake by the end of the afternoon. We managed to break the church's card machines in that we exceeded the transactions limits, what a terrific problem to have! And whilst the event wasn't primarily about fund raising, we know we have exceeded expectations albeit the final count is still underway, benefiting both the church and the bell fund.

More subtly our success came in the way we worked together across the Parish teams. Ladies from Pam's team helped with baking cakes, bell ringers' cakes came from near and far, as far as Somerset! Paul our lovely, long-suffering Verger couldn't have been more accommodating. The music team bowed to our every whim, allowing the judges to be ensconced on the mezzanine floor of the choir vestry and microphone wires from the belfry were flung down and fed through their window to the judges' laptop. That's before we mention our interruption of music lessons and organ practice. The OBH team allowed us the use of their facilities including their tables. So, the teamwork wasn't just amongst the competing bands working to perfect their striking but also with those supporting us. The working group had been preparing for months (so grateful to have had them all in my corner!) and the volunteers both from our tower and nearby towers too, created a collaborative vibe on the day.

There was the unexpected success of drawing in visitors from the town centre, drawn in by the sound of the bells being rung so rhythmically and accurately (We do try hard with our own ringing, but the experts really were with us that day!) Some of those joining us had never dared to step inside before. Whilst improved lighting makes our church so much more inviting, it can still feel a little intimidating if you're not a member of our congregation. The visitors were attracted by the buzz of the atmosphere that the bell ringers had created and, they ventured in to see what was going on. Joining the melée of ringers both sitting outside to hear their competition rivals and those milling about inside enjoying our catering. It allowed us the opportunity to invite them in further to see the wonder of our church and chapels, to learn something of bell ringing and to see from themselves the beauty of our building.

Our partner organisations enjoyed their day too. We had representatives from the Ringing World periodical, Loughborough Bell foundry and The Association of Ringing Teachers. For each of them they were raising their profile but also selling bell ringing related items. And each of them successfully left with way less than they'd had when they'd arrived. Happily they'd had a steady stream of visitors to their stands throughout the day.

The clean-up at the end of the day was once again a successful team effort. The 'condition photos' taken during setup were a great help. We'd been given permission to move a few things to accommodate our needs and by referring back to the photos, we trust we managed to put everything back where it had come from. We'd had volunteers responsible for litter and they were perhaps the most underutilised of our volunteers! With our guests on the whole being very respectful of our surroundings, leaving the 'litter pickers' with very little to do!

It has to be said that on every measure we were immensely pleased with the way the day went, not least because we got the weather right too!

Sand Cooper
Tower Secretary

Photographs by Roger Lawson

Calendar and Prayer Intentions for November 2026

1	All Saints' Day	The Faithful Departed	White House Green
2	All Souls' Day	Our own family and friends who have died	White House Way
3	Richard Hooker – Priest	The Diocese of Exeter	Whitefields Crescent
4	Feria	Schools and Colleges in Solihull	Whitefields Gate
5	Feria	The Government of the United Kingdom	Whitefields Road
6	William Temple, Archbishop	Sarah, Archbishop of Canterbury	Widney Manor Road
7	Willibrord of York, Bishop	Stephen, Archbishop of York	Willoughby Drive
8	**Remembrance Sunday**	The Armed Forces	Winterbourne Road
9	Margery Kempe, Mystic	An increase in vocations to the Religious Life	Winthorpe Drive
10	Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome	The Roman Catholic Church	Witham Croft
11	Martin, Bishop of Tours	Those who died in battle	Witley Avenue
12	Feria	The Community at Catherine de Barnes	Witley Farm Close
13	Charles Simeon, Priest	Those discerning a calling to Ordained Ministry	Wollescote Drive
14	Samuel Seabury, Bishop	The Church and People of North America	Woodbury Grove
15	**Second Sunday Before Advent**	Solihull Parish	Woodfield Road
16	Margaret, Queen of Scotland	The Peace of The World	Woodlea Drive
17	Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln	Michael, Bishop of Birmingham	Woodperry Avenue
18	Elizabeth of Hungary	Those who support food banks	Woodside Way
19	Hilda, Abbess of Whitby	Our Neighbours	Woodston Grove
20	Edmund, King of East Angles	The King and the Royal Family	Wroxall Road
21	Feria	Esther, Bishop of Aston	Albany Gardens
22	**Christ the King**	Those preparing for Baptism and all Godparents	Alderbrook Road
23	Clement, Bishop of Rome	Parishes currently in vacancy	Alderham Close
24	Feria	Phelim, Archdeacon of Aston	Alderminster Road
25	Catherine of Alexandria	Our Youth and Children's Ministry	Alderpark Road
26	Feria	The Mayor and Councillors of Solihull Borough	Alderton Close
27	Feria	Our Local Members of Parliament	Alderwood Place
28	Feria	Those preparing for Marriage	Alston Close
29	**First Sunday of Advent**	That we may keep a Holy Advent	Alston Road
30	Andrew the Apostle	The Church and people of Scotland	Anchor Lane

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

From the St. Alphege Register

Baptisms

27th September Evangeline Shelton

Weddings

None

Renewal of Vows

None

Funerals

22nd September Jean Barrington at Robin Hood Crematorium
13th October Merrill Golby at St Alphege
2nd October Irene Olive Bristow at St Alphege

Interment of Ashes

None

Names taken from the Chantry Book for Remembrance in November 2026

Lawrie Andrew
Mabel Campkin
Alan Clarke
Peter Cooper
Sydney Flood
Frederick Fowler
Joan Freeth
Margaret Harris
John Haselhurst
Alexander Herd
Peter Herd
Norman Jewers
June Loads
Arthur Middleton
Lawrence Albert Patey
Gordon Ross
Rachel Scarff
Pat Sharrock
Leslie Starbuck
Joe Sterling
Dennis Tate
William Tew
Joan Watts
Frank Wright



St Alphege

Sunday 8th November

9.30 a.m. All Age Holy Communion

Worship Notes for November 2026

November brings to an end this liturgical year. The Sundays in November focus on the coming kingdom of Jesus Christ. Although it is not a separate season November is designated as Kingdomtide.

November brings us a Principal Feast Day, several Festivals and Commemorations and one National Event.

November begins with the *Principal Feast of All Saints' Day.* On this day we celebrate the lives of the myriad number of saints, that "great cloud of witnesses", many of whom are not separately honoured by name. *All Saints' Day* will be celebrated at our Sunday Morning Worship in all our churches on 1st November.

All Saint's Day is immediately followed by *All Soul's Day*, also called the *Commemoration of the Faithful Departed.* For many this is a much more personal occasion. At our Evening service at 5 p.m. on 1st November we will remember the lives of family and friends who have died as well as those whose funerals have been held through the Parish in recent years. There will be an opportunity for departed loved ones to be mentioned by name and then to lay a lighted candle in their memory.

The Second Sunday in November is *Remembrance Sunday,* a National Commemoration in thanksgiving and remembrance of those who died in war, especially, but not exclusively, in the two World Wars. In the town centre, the mayor, councillors, and other dignitaries attend an outdoor service which includes the laying of wreaths around the War Memorial. Our Remembrance service then continues in church. There will be separate services in all churches, including at St. Catherine's Church in Catherine de Barnes.

The fourth Sunday, 22nd November, is the *Feast Day of Christ the King.* This day makes a fitting end to the liturgical year as we celebrate the triumphant reign and true kingship of Jesus Christ.

This final Sunday in November is *Advent Sunday.* As the month ends, we begin the new Liturgical Year, Year B in the lectionary. *Advent* is a season of preparation, as we focus on the last days before the return of Jesus Christ, and on our own preparedness for that event.

Fr. Roy

OBH Car Parking

Would those you who use the OBH car park please remember to renew your car carking permit with the Parish office.

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

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GARDENING SERVICES
All types of gardening work undertaken
Serving Solihull and surrounding areas
Free advice available
Contact Steve Byrne 07969 692934

November 2026 Services

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

Wednesday 4th November

St. Michael	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist

Thursday 5th November

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

Sunday 8th November – Remembrance Sunday

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	10.50 a.m.	Act of Remembrance and Civic Service – all welcome
St. Catherine	11.00 a.m.	Remembrance Service
St. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Evensong

Wednesday 11th November

St. Michael	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	11.00 a.m.	Remembrance Service

Thursday 12th November

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist

Sunday 15th November – Second Sunday Before Advent

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.	Choral Eucharist
St. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Taizé

Wednesday 18th November

St. Michael	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist

Thursday 19th November

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist (MU)

Sunday 22nd November – Christ the King

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.	Parish Volunteer Thanksgiving Service

Wednesday 25th November

St. Michael	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist

Thursday 26th November

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist

Sunday 29th November – Advent Sunday

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.	Advent Carol Service

Morning Prayer

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

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

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

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



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

The Guardians AGM took place on October 1st. The year had included successful events and a very positive increase in our reserves. The Trustees were thanked for their vital work in ensuring the good health of the charity. There followed discussion on a range of matters including those related to maintaining the fabric of the building.

An early enquiry was about the opening and closing of the wrought iron gates in the north porch. Photographs of large lead tiles from the 18th century, recently found when repairing the roof, were highlighted. There was a question about plans for sorting out the peeling unbreathable paint in and around the crypt chapel. Most importantly, there were questions about the timetable for dealing with water ingress around the site where the spire sits on the tower.

Towards the end of the meeting Sheila Payne advised us she was going to gradually pass on the baton relating to her running of The Guardians Floodlighting scheme. When the new team has taken over, we will let you know. She was applauded for all her work supporting the Guardians over many years.

Upcoming events

Wednesday 9th December 2026 12.15 p.m.

Guardians Fundraising Christmas Lunch, Drum and Monkey

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 of prizes will be welcome. Judith Hetherington is kindly organising this event, so to book please contact her at j.hetherington@btinternet.com

Saturday 17th April 2027 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

St. Alphege History Fair St. Alphege Church

St. Alphege Church was restored and decorated in the Victorian era. Funding was often by benefactors who had moved to Solihull and had family businesses which developed from the Industrial Revolution, a revolution which evolved first in the West Midlands. The plan is to explore this part of our heritage. The event will be open to all.

Roger Shinton (Trustee)
rogershinton@outlook.com

Floodlighting

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

The cost is £8.00 for 2 hours; £14.00 for 4 hours. Please give 21 days' notice.

Forms are available from the Guardians notice boards in St. Alphege Church or in the Oliver Bird Hall. Alternatively, you can contact Sheila Payne, details below.

Names are displayed on monthly lists on these notice boards and also in the Solihull Parish News magazine and acknowledged with a card sent to the donor.

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

Sheila Payne
Scheme organiser:-
0121 706 0520
email: russellpayne110@aol.com

The Church was floodlit in October 2026 to remember the following:

1st October	In loving memory of Jonathan Mark
7th October	Royal Marine Ashley Hicks. Your love and laughter will live on in our hearts
17th October	In loving memory of my dear husband David Oakes on his birthday
17th October	Leonard Kidner. Remembering you on your birthday
19th October	In loving memory of Nicole Potts on her birthday
23rd October	In loving memory of my wife Alma Reah on this our wedding anniversary
25th October	Raymond Colston Horswill. 02.02.28 - 25.10.08. Much loved by all who knew him. Devoted husband and father
31st October	In loving memory of Vivian Soden on her birthday
31st October	In loving memory of Nicola Blakeman

Music Matters

It was a joy to welcome visiting families to our Chorister Experience Day early in October. Children from Widney, Monkspath and Bentley Heath schools came along to sing alongside our choristers for the afternoon, and to learn a bit about what being a chorister at St. Alphege





entails. They did some fun warm-ups and learned some hymns and songs, as well as exploring the church, learning about saints, making a stained-glass cross, and looking for animals inside and outside church – to link with the theme of St. Francis ready for the All Age Pet Service. Some families had never been inside St. Alphege Church before – and everyone really appreciated the beauty of the inside of the building. Our choristers were wonderful role models, helping visiting children to follow the music and ensuring they enjoyed their time with us. The event finished with a short service so parents could listen to what the children had been working on during the afternoon.





A huge thank you to all involved, especially our choristers and parents who had invited friends along to the event. We hope that some of these families will return for the Pet Service and some of the children will become regular members of the choir.

Looking ahead, this edition of Parish News will probably be published just as we are in full swing at the Beer Festival – thank you in advance to all who will offer their support to the event. We'll then be in the season of *Remembrance*, followed closely by *Advent* and *Christmas*! A key date for your diaries for December is the *'Carols for Life'* concert, where we fundraise for Cancer Research UK – the date is Saturday 5th December for a 7 p.m. concert – please do make a note and support this event if you can.

Isabel Baumber

Christmas Greetings

Parish Christmas Card

Once again we have high-quality Parish Christmas cards and we encourage everyone to buy them. The cards are now available from the Bookstall in church, from the Parish Office or by contacting Fran Halstead (07710 329030, fran.halstead@gmail.com). The picture this year is a scene of St. Alphege Church in the snow from a watercolour by Alan Fairbairn. The packs are £5 for 10 cards. Please buy while stocks last and support the Bookstall which distributes its profits to selected charities. The Bookstall also continues to sell an excellent range of cards and books for all occasions at modest prices. Please do support it.



Readers' Christmas Greetings

As in the past, Parish News is happy to print individual Christmas greetings. If any readers would like to send greetings to their friends through the December edition of Parish News, please send messages written exactly as they should be printed to the Editor at parishnews@solihullparish.org.uk or give your message to the Parish Office by 4th December, please.

Christmas Greetings

The Editor and Parish News Committee wish all readers a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

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What's on for Families? November

In The Week

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

Friday 20th , 4-6pm, £2.50 per person (£10 max)
St Alphege Church, Solihull



Youth Club

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

Sundays

Sunday 15th, Sunday 22nd, Sunday 29th November

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



All Age Worship

Sunday 8th October - 9.30am

St Alphege Church, Church Hill, B91 3RT

AGE 5+

Crafternoons

HOLIDAY CRAFT CLUB

£5 PER DAY

EASTER - SUMMER - CHRISTMAS

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DROP OFF FROM 1PM
COLLECTION UNTIL 4PM

OLIVER BIRD HALL
CHURCH HILL
B91 3RT

SOLIHULL PARISH

CHILDREN'S & Families Ministry

Crafternoons

Christmas Crafternoons Dates 2026:

MONDAY 21ST DECEMBER 2026
TUESDAY 22ND DECEMBER 2026
WEDNESDAY 23RD DECEMBER 2026

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 are available in St. Helen's Church

every Sunday morning.

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.

It's been a busy time at St. Helen's

The Ladybird Montessori School continues to welcome new children and the dance school that meets in our buildings continues to thrive, as some of our congregation witnessed with complimentary tickets to their show at the Core Theatre in July.

Cameo continues, as does Coffee and Cake, every 2nd Wednesday of the month. Anne Noble and her team continue to do sterling for the Wednesday Lunch Club, which is always a delicious and sociable event. Anne is always looking for helpers, especially drivers, so if you feel you can help, please contact her.

Several of our church family enjoyed the Parish Away Day on Saturday 12th September, spending time with other members of Solihull Parish, as well as various activities, a splendid lunch, and a chance to meet with the resident menagerie. Clearly, like the visit to Launde Abbey in June, these are events which will hopefully be repeated in the future. One of the spin-offs from the June retreat is a monthly Julian of Norwich quiet prayer session led by Revd. Anne Haselhurst in St. Helen's Chapel. These meetings will be held on the third Tuesday of the month at 2.30 p.m. and all are most welcome.

We were very happy, as always, when some of the members of St. Michael's joined us for Morning Worship throughout August. We look forward to meeting up with them soon at the Quiz Evening which they are running at St. Helen's on 17th October.

At our Morning Praise service in September we welcomed Jonathon Cheal from MACS (Malawi Association for Christian Support) who brought us up to date with the work of this charity that we have supported as a church for 15 years. Jonathan is a new trustee and visited Malawi this summer.

Our Harvest Supper was held on 26th September and was attended by nearly 60 people half of whom were visitors, both friends, and neighbours from St. Helen's Road. We enjoyed a 2 course supper and an amusing and challenging talk from Nick Cuthbert, a friend of Chris and Jenny's. Revd. Nick Parker took our Harvest Service the following morning and we were pleased to collect many donations of non-perishable food for the Helping Hands Foodbank at Renewal Christian Centre. We also look forward to welcoming again the whole of Greswold School for their Harvest Services on 5th October.





Jean Fewins

St Helen's Christmas Fayre

SOLIHULL PARISH

SATURDAY November 28th 11am 'til 2pm

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AWAY FROM IT ALL
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Fingers on buzzers…

At the time of writing, the members of the St. Michael's D.C.C. are putting the final touches to the arrangements for 'A Quizzical Evening', which is to take place at St. Helen's Church on Saturday 17th October.

This is an event for the whole Parish, and I am very grateful to the folks of St. Helen's for hosting the evening and to members of St. Alphege Church for helping with the sale of tickets.

By the time you read this, the event will have taken place but I'm very grateful to everyone who helped with the organising, the food, the musical items and, of course, the quiz itself. Thank you, also, to all who came along to make it such an enjoyable evening. Who knows - we may have another evening of testing our general knowledge at some time in the future!

On a wing and a (silent) prayer…

On the weekend of 3rd – 4th October, we took part in the *Nightwatch* Survey organised by the Bat Conservation Trust. *NightWatch* is a community science project helping people to discover the hidden world of night time nature living in their neighbourhood.

Here's how it worked. A *NightWatch* kit arrived in the post, which included an 'AudioMoth' ultrasonic recorder which detects bats flying past during the night. (As advised, we left the detector out overnight in Oak Cottage garden.) Several members of St. Michael's also spent an hour over sunset watching and listening for night time wildlife.

Once the survey was complete, we sent the kit back to the Bat Conservation Trust, who will run our recordings through their Sound Classification System and will send us a bespoke report about the bats we discovered during our survey!

Before the ending of the day…

On Saturday 31st October, Grounded Church took place in the Vicarage garden. The focus was the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain (pronounced 'Sow-en'), a name which comes from the old Irish for 'Summer's End'. 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.

The next Grounded Church gathering will be on Saturday 19th December at 3 p.m. in Oak Cottage garden, when our theme will be Yule and The Longest Night. Everyone is welcome to come along to be part of this event as we anticipate the coming of Christ.

Fr. Simon


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Advent Days are Here Again!?

I need to begin this article with a confession – or two.

The first is that Advent is creeping up on me this year. As I write it begins in just 8.5 weeks' time and, having missed August, my mind is still very much in September.

The second is that I saw recently an advert from a well-known supermarket, advertising a mince pie Advent Calendar (!?). And I was tempted! (By the pies, not the price!)

A quick scan of the internet confirms that Advent Calendars are big business for consumerism these days, containing not only chocolate, but books, make-up, candles, perfume, tequila, whisky – and now mince pies – to name but a few.

It appears that some people really must have more money than sense, and consumerism is quick to exploit that.

On the other hand, everyone loves a treat every now and again and, if Advent doesn't mean anything to you, then an Advent Calendar is really just an excuse for that. At the very least the people who buy and use them are doing something different during Advent. We can only pray that, during that time, something of the real reason for the season wears off on them.

Talking of which, where does that leave us? How is Advent going to be different for each of us from the rest of our busy lives?

I looked up the Church of England Advent Book for this year. It does look interesting, but I decided against committing myself to something as 'hefty' as reading a theological book this Advent. That's just where I am at the moment. You may feel differently so, if you're interested, here is the blurb about the book:

The Archbishop of York's Advent Book 2026

Walking with Angels **by** **Eleanor Sanderson**

Listen to the words of angels throughout the Bible and enter Advent with a deeper awareness of the connection between the heaven and earthly realms.

Through the spiritual practice of prayer walking, this reflective guide encourages readers to slow down, step outside, and engage both body and spirit as you journey through the Advent season. Drawing on the words spoken by angels in Scripture, it explores how these messengers of God reveal the good news at the heart of the Christian story.

Each of the four weeks of Advent focuses on a different aspect of that message, helping readers grow in love for God, for their neighbours, and for themselves. Rooted in humility

and attentiveness to Christ's authority, this practice grounds prayer in everyday life, inviting us to join our earthly voices with the praise of heaven.

With journalling prompts and questions for reflection or group discussion, Walking with Angels offers a meaningful, embodied way to prepare for the coming of Christ this Advent. Includes vivid accounts of the author's own and others' personal experiences of angelic encounters.

Although the book isn't for me at this time – I may get it and save it for reading later – the spiritual practice of prayer walking always appeals.

With that in mind, I am hoping to be able to make the Labyrinth available at some point during Advent and am putting out feelers for a venue even as I compose this article – *watch this space!* If you've never walked the Labyrinth before, Advent may be a good opportunity to have a go.

In short, the Labyrinth is a way to connect with an ancient way of prayer that is still relevant for our lives today.

"Thus says the Lord: Stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for the ***ancient paths****, where the good way lies; and walk in it and find rest for your souls."* Jer 6:16

"When you pray, move your feet."

West African Proverb

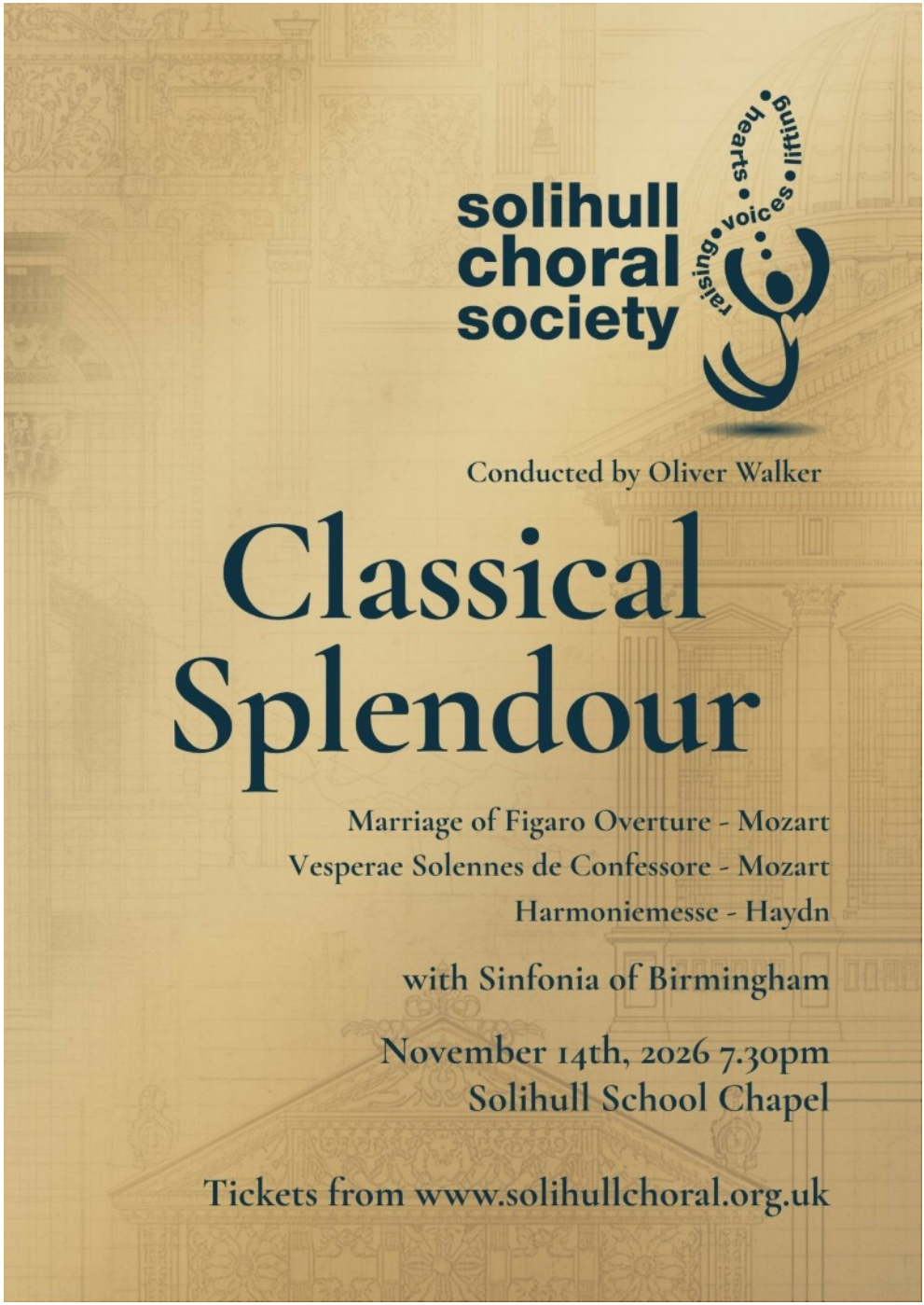
Comprising of the combined imagery of a circle and a spiral, the path of the Labyrinth meanders around a purposeful path and, unlike a maze, it has no dead ends. While walking the Labyrinth you will follow a circuitous route to the centre and back out again. Representing unity and wholeness, with a "divine" centre, the Labyrinth symbolises a transformative journey to your own centre and back out into the world. Labyrinths embody spiritual reflection, with a way of praying with your feet – walking *Soul to sole.* Perfect, to my mind, as a part of our journey through Advent.

So, Advent marks the beginning of the church year. It is a time for reflection in darkness, for renewal of hope and for a movement towards a beginning. In whatever way we use it, whether we use an Advent calendar or not, whether we walk the Labyrinth or not, we as Christians are called to make Advent different to the rest of our busy lives.

What will you do to accomplish this, this Advent?

Thanks for listening!

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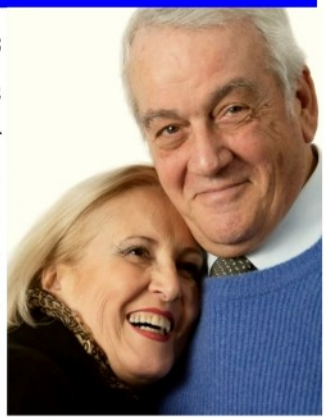
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Project Turnaround Update

It is now two years since the congregational presentations about Project Turnaround. This is the name of the plans to modernise our buildings in support of our mission to welcome the whole community into St. Alphege Church, to "turn around" and become welcoming, accessible to all and adaptable for use 7 days a week by the church and the local community for generations to come.

Phase One of Project Turnaround was the new lighting system, which we have been enjoying now for exactly two years. Phase Two, which we are calling "Open for All", is about internal changes to the lovely church, following our forefathers in adapting the building for contemporary use. Phase Three, in a few years' time, will be modernising our Parish Centre and the Oliver Bird Hall.

There have been updates to the original plans, which have been explained in the Parish News. The good news is, that after years of talking to the diocesan authorities, these updated phase two plans have now received full faculty permission to go ahead, which is very exciting.

In Phase Two we want "Open Doors":

The existing oak doors at the west and north entrances will be fixed open to welcome the community with new glazed doors installed to create an important visual link between inside and out, as well as improve thermal insulation and security.

We will create "Open Space" in the church:

The fixed seating will be replaced by stackable chairs with some fixed perimeter seating, making the building more flexible and accessible. A new level stone floor will be installed throughout the nave and north transept, with underfloor heating as part of the Church of England's journey towards net zero.

We want to be "Open for All":

A welcome area at the west end will be created including a refreshment station, bookstall, accessible toilets and storage. The flexible seating will allow many different configurations for worship and events and enable us to bring musicians to be closer to congregations and audiences. Together with updated AV systems the experience will be improved for all.

So Open Doors, Open Space and Open for All. The detailed plans are available for you to browse at the back of St. Alphege Church and on the parish website.

Now we have to work out how to raise the money to fund these works. Discussions have begun with the Parochial Church Council, and we will be approaching various charitable trusts and grant making organisations. It is also important that we each consider prayerfully how generous we can be individually to make this building that we love fit for use by the coming generations. More on that to come!

If any of you would like to talk in more detail about this and how you could help, please don't hesitate to contact Revd. Nick, or Andy Halstead, or Philip Leach, or Deirdre Moll or Pam Price. We'd love to talk to you.

Andy Halstead

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News from the Church of England

Churches across Birmingham and the region are screening the National Emergency Briefing, a powerful new film about the urgency of the environmental crisis. Presented by Chris Packham and featuring nine leading scientists and experts, the film lays out the impacts of the ongoing environmental crisis on aspects of life in the UK, and what we can do to respond. The film is designed to be screened in communities, so that viewers can understand the scale of the crisis and begin conversations about how to respond together.

The National Emergency Briefing unpacks the impacts of the climate and nature crises on our world, including on our weather, food supply, health and national security. While the impacts of climate change are already being felt in the UK and around the world, it is the poorest communities that are most affected, and least prepared to deal with the consequences. The film speaks directly to our call to care for God's creation, as well as Jesus' command to love one another and care for the most vulnerable.

The film is being screened in churches, community centres, other places of worship, and workplaces across the country, with local leaders invited to attend. Each event is followed by a discussion of what action communities and individuals can take.

The film was shown at St. Philip's Church Centre in Dorridge earlier this year. One of those who attended the showing said, "I know we are facing a global crisis on an unparalleled scale. But watching this hard-hitting film truly brought home the sheer emergency of the situation, as well as the direction now in how to make a difference."

Rt. Revd. Graham Usher, Bishop of Norwich and Lead Bishop for the Environment explained, "I encourage churches to invite their wider community and show this film – it's a wake up for us all. Its message to care for climate, people and nature is so urgently needed, not least so that we might live and act as Jesus would have us be."

Later this month we will be showing the National Emergency Briefing at St. Alphege Church. There will be two screenings to enable people to attend either in the daytime or in the evening. Each event should last no more than two hours and refreshments will be served. The dates and times are:

Monday 16th November 2026 at 7.15 p.m. (doors open from 6.50 p.m.)

Tuesday 17th November 2026 at 10.15 a.m. (doors open from 9.50 a.m.)

Following the 50-minute film, Caroline Egan, Church of England Birmingham Assistant Diocesan Environment Officer, will host a structured discussion on what this means for our community; this should last no longer than 45 minutes. In addition to our church communities, we are also inviting our MPs, councillors, educational leaders, other Solihull community leaders and members of their organisations.

This is a great opportunity for us to respond to these important issues as a parish and as a community, and to support and encourage one another in caring for God's world. I hope that you are able to be there.

Fr. Simon

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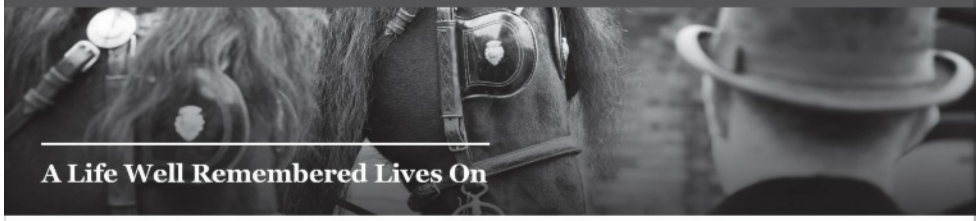
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Darling Elizabeth

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On Thursday 1st October members and friends of Mothers' Union enjoyed an interesting and entertaining talk entitled *Darling Elizabeth* by Mary Bodfish. It was about the early life of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, from her birth in 1900 until the death of her husband King George VI in 1952.



Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon was the ninth child of Lord and Lady Strathmore, and she spent most of her childhood in Glamis castle in Scotland. Elizabeth grew up in a family which had high moral ethics and they instilled in her a strong sense of duty and service to others; her childhood was secure and happy, she had a mischievous streak and gained the nickname of *Merry Mischief.*

She was 14 when war broke out, her brothers went away to fight and her parents opened Glamis Castle as a hospital for wounded soldiers. Elizabeth was too young to be a nurse, so she helped by talking to the soldiers. They loved her for her warmth and lively personality.

1919 was her 'Coming Out' year as a debutante and she enjoyed the year, making lifelong friends. Among these friends was the Hon. James Stuart, an equerry to Prince Albert. Elizabeth was introduced to Albert who fell in love with her and described her as 'The most wonderful woman in the world'. She didn't immediately accept his proposal of marriage, but he was determined and on the third time she accepted. They were married in Westminster Abbey on 30th April 1923, and they moved to Royal Lodge, Windsor. On their marriage they were given the titles of Duke and Duchess of York.

Daughter, Elizabeth, was born in 1926 and Margaret followed in 1931. But things were about to take a dramatic turn in 1936 when King George V died and Edward became king. When Edward abdicated, Albert succeeded to the throne as King George VI. Elizabeth never forgave Wallis Simpson - she had disliked her from the start. The Coronation was on 12th May 1937 and at that time storm clouds were gathering over Europe. War broke out on 3rd September 1939, but the King and Queen insisted that the family stayed in London. They went to bomb damaged sites and talked to victims who had lost their homes and, in fact, Buckingham Palace was bombed several times.

The King and Queen celebrated their Silver Wedding in 1948, but three years later the King was diagnosed with lung cancer. They were deeply in love and Elizabeth was devastated. The King always called her 'My darling Elizabeth', she had been his strength and rock throughout their marriage. He died in February 1952 at the age of 56 and in April that year, Elizabeth took the title of Queen Mother. She lived a long life and died in 2002 at the age of 101.

Susan Leach



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Update from the Parish Wardens

Parish Plans

Decisions have to be made soon about the projects which we would like to move forward in these next few years, but we are going to have to prioritise these as we have limited financial resources and are losing a significant amount of money each year. More information will be given shortly and the Parochial Church Council will be making some decisions about these at the November meeting. Please do make yourself aware of the details and make your opinions known as well as praying. A Parish Prayer Morning is being held on Saturday 21st November to pray particularly about these and the future of the Parish.

St. Helen's Harvest Supper

St. Helen's held a well-attended and successful Harvest Supper in September to which a good number of regular members and many guests came whom we hope to see again. The food was good and Nick Cuthbert spoke well and challengingly about the Christian Faith. Thanks to Chris and Jenny Carrington and the many volunteers who helped.

Please do support the **St. Helen's Christmas Fayre** on Saturday 28th November.

Paul Nelson, Pastor at Gas Street South Church

Paul Nelson came and spoke well at our latest Men's Breakfast**.** It was encouraging to hear how God has guided him step by step over the years – no clear forward plan but listening to what God was saying at points on the way and feeling his presence. Gas Street South meets at Tudor Grange School whilst they are still hunting for their own premises in South Shirley/Dickens Heath Area.

The Guardians held their A.G.M. in October with a good attendance. It was good to hear of the initiatives that were taken over the past year both to allow people to know more of St. Alphege and its history, and also visits and social events for fellowship and to raise money. We are so grateful for the wonderful work done over many years to raise considerable funds which have helped and are helping now to fund work on the church. We do thank Roger Shinton, Martin Ayers, Phil Godfrey, Judith Hetherington, Andy Moore, and Nick Parker, the current Trustees, for their great work in leading the Trust, and for all the other volunteers and members too.

It is hoped that work will soon start on the maintenance work on the spire and the tower, which will be followed with the repairs to the clock.

Frisbee Golf Nick has invented a great new outdoor game – Frisbee Golf – which the Youth tried recently – it involves setting up say 9 'holes' where you have a number of throws along each 'hole' until you hit a bean bag. Then onto the next!

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
October 2026

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Matters of Faith

Wendy Mary Beckett (25th February 1930 – 26th December 2018), better known as Sister Wendy, was a British religious sister and art historian who became known internationally during the 1990s when she presented a series of BBC television documentaries on the history of art. Her programmes, such as Sister Wendy's Odyssey and Sister Wendy's Grand Tour, often drew a 25% share of the British viewing audience.

She joined the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur when she was just 17 years old. After 20 years teaching in convent schools, Sister Wendy's health began to falter and she was permitted to pursue the life of a hermit near a convent of Carmelite nuns in East Anglia.

Her caravan in the grounds of the convent was small, cold and basic, but was crammed with postcards and calendars of works of art. Starting in the early 1980s, she began to put down on paper her thoughts about paintings that she had only ever seen in reproduction.

The routine she followed in the caravan was both simple and extraordinary. She would get up at 1 a.m. (the best time for prayer and contemplation, she said!) and find time for a couple of hours of writing. At some stage, she would walk over to the convent to collect food and her post and then turn in for the night at 6 p.m. She communicated with the nuns only by note and lived, for the most part, alone and in total silence. It was as she wanted it.

A visitor to the convent, the cook and devout Catholic Delia Smith, was so impressed by Sister Wendy's writings that in the late 1980s she persuaded the Catholic Herald newspaper to publish them as a weekly series. This led to an appearance on a TV arts show and eventually to five major series which she scripted and presented.

In an interview with the producer of her programmes, Sister Wendy was asked what she hoped the viewers would get from watching her. She replied, 'I hope that everybody who watches it will realize what art has for them; that this is their heritage... What the series will do is perhaps encourage those humbler than myself to realize that if you look and if you think, your reaction is as good as anybody's. There's no one way to look at paintings.'

Sister Wendy's success rested largely on her formidable intellect and her sure-footed ability to bridge the gulf between fine art and a popular television audience. Her insights into the artists she encountered on screen struck a chord with many who had previously lacked the vocabulary and the confidence to feel at home in art galleries. Her first book on art, Contemporary Women Artists, was published in 1988. She once observed: "It is my apostolic duty to talk about art. If you don't know about God, art is the only thing that can set you free."

Years after she had given up making television programmes, she was constantly stopped by people wanting to know when she would be back on the small screen. "No one else does it quite like you," one woman told her. "It's because of you that I'm here today."

Sister Wendy died on the 26 December 2018, at the age of 88. Her work still inspires and informs many who seek to explore the wonders of visual art.

Fr. Simon



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- a talk by Derek Woolf about the nuclear testing in 1957.

Thursday 19th November : 10.30am in church. *MU Corporate Eucharist.*

Thursday 3rd December : 1.00pm in the OBH. *Advent Lunch*
followed by a *Meditation* with Revd Nick.

Thursday 17th December : 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 6th November. If you would like to attend this friendly meal, please contact Carol Caldicott by phone, as below.

Carol Caldicott
0121 705 3168

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

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