

THE BRIDGES

ST BRIDGET'S WITH CALDY PARISH MAGAZINE

**THEN JESUS WAS LED UP BY THE SPIRIT
INTO THE WILDERNESS TO BE TEMPTED
BY THE DEVIL**

£1.00

www.stbridgetschurch.org.uk

www.caldychurch.org.uk

March 2026 (Vol. 16: No 2)

THE COVER STORY

The more observant among you may have noticed that the magazine cover looks different this month. We thought [actually, the Editor thought] that it might be good to have a name for our Parish Magazine so that you can ask your friends “Have you read this month’s ‘The Bridge’?”, rather than “the St Bridget’s and Caldy parish magazine”. The Bridge’ has several connotations: ‘Bridge(t)’, a bridge between our two churches, a bridge between the church and our local community. What do you think?

These are Jacob the sheep eggs from www.bettys.co.uk, not ‘Real’ eggs



Real Easter Eggs

Out of the 80 million chocolate Easter eggs sold each year in the UK, **The Real Easter Egg** is the first and only Fairtrade chocolate Easter egg to share the Easter story.

The Real Easter Egg campaign has been running since 2010 and involves thousands of churches, schools and groups. It crosses all denominations and offers individuals a simple way to share the Easter Story while supporting Fairtrade and charitable projects.



Real Easter Eggs are not available in supermarkets, but they can be purchased from the Fair Trade stall in St Bridget’s Centre, which is open after the 10am Service on Sundays and at the Link café on Wednesday mornings, from 9.30 to 11.30 am. As well as the milk chocolate eggs, there are other options available, including dark chocolate eggs and **Easter Blessings** chocolate bars.

LETTER FROM ALEX



P is for pause, ponder, prayer and ... purple

If you wander into one of our churches during March, you will most likely see the purple frontals hanging on the altars*. During the Christmas season, the frontal and vestments were white and gold, all the weeks up to Candlemas and then, for just two brief weeks they turned to green before the purple of Lent. The purple stays until Palm Sunday when the frontals will be red until Maundy Thursday. During the Maundy Thursday service at St Bridget's the altars will be stripped and left bare for Good Friday and Holy Saturday until finally on Easter day, the white and gold will return in celebration of the resurrection of Jesus.

These colours mark the Christian calendar, with white and gold for celebration, red for saints and martyrs and the Holy Spirit, purple for penitential and reflective times and green for the other counted Sundays which come between the festivals. Green marks the period called Ordinary Time—not because it is ordinary but because it stems from the word ordinal—meaning ordered or counted. These liturgical colours help us mark the Christian liturgical calendar.

There is something of an assumption that the Christian calendar simply follows the secular calendars which hang on our walls or on our phones but in fact Christians have an alternative spiritual calendar, just like other major world religions. This Christian calendar starts its new year at Advent, and

we have a full month of a new year containing two church seasons, Advent and Christmas before we even reach the secular new year on January 1st.

As we start our 'purple period' of Lent and our journey towards Easter we have an opportunity to pause. To notice the things which are filling our minds and our time. To be honest before God about how we are. To ponder and pray. To ask ourselves if there are things we need to change. To consider how we might seek to understand ourselves and God a little better.

Lent It is not about being dour or harsh with ourselves, but about clearing space: turning again towards prayer, generosity and attentiveness to God's presence and perhaps taking something up which draws us closer to God.

As the days lengthen and there are signs of new life all around us, we also prepare and look forward to celebrating Easter, filling our churches once more with gold and white, with flowers and light and celebrating the message of the cross, that nothing, not even death can defeat love.

I hope that you can join us as we journey together during Lent and as we celebrate that message of hope which Easter brings at the culmination of our journeying

*Now the green blade riseth from the buried grain,
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.*

John Macleod Campbell Crum (1872-1958)

Alex

*During Lent St Bridget's uses both a purple frontal and an unbleached linen frontal known as 'Lenten array'

Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you

The Parish has recently received a very generous legacy from the estate of the late Carol Burd. We are immensely grateful to be remembered in this way and the funds will help to realise ongoing projects.

Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you

Don't believe the newspaper headlines!

"Turmoil in Anglican Church as Synod halts work on gay equality"

At the recent meeting of the General Synod of the Church of England, the process known as *Living in Love and Faith*, which was exploring changes to allow same sex blessings and marriages in church, was brought to a close. A new process has been commended to continue these explorations. The newspaper headlines rather provocatively described the church as 'halting work on gay equality', which was not accurate.

As part of the Inclusive Church Network, this parish continues to affirm all faithful, loving relationships and marriages and is happy to offer blessings of these at regular services in both our churches. Anyone seeking such a blessing should contact the Rector or Parish Office.

Together for the Church of England is advocating a more inclusive, diverse Church. Key details regarding their stance include:

- **Support for Change:** The group urges the House of Bishops to act on the "clearly expressed will of Synod" to move towards full inclusion.
- **Reaction to Delays:** They have expressed disappointment, "lamenting the pastoral failure" of the bishops regarding delays in LGBTQ+ equality.
- **Commitment to the Church:** Despite their push for change, they choose to remain in the Church of England, investing in its mission rather than withdrawing financial support.
- **Support for Trans Rights:** The group has stated that transgender individuals are "beloved, held, and rejoiced over by God" and has pledged to stand against transphobia.

Together for the Church of England has, in collaboration with Inclusive Church, expressed that the group desires a "truly hospitable Church for LGBTQ+ people, where all may find authentic welcome, safety, and joy in the life of Christ's Body".

The Synod meets again in July, and *Together for the Church of England* is planning to ask for a motion: 'That this Synod affirms that there are no fundamental objections to being in a committed, faithful, intimate same-sex relationship, and that such a relationship can be entirely compatible with Christian discipleship.'

This is a safe space

BLISTER PACKS

We are committed to recycling BUT it costs us £100 per blister pack box, and we are finding it hard to cover costs. Not surprisingly, the boxes fill up VERY quickly!



PLEASE consider making a donation, either via this QR code or putting a donation into the parish office (through the letter box if the office is closed) especially if you are dropping off large quantities of packs.

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

@ST. BRIDGET'S

On Tuesday 17th February, a good number of members and visitors turned out to listen to John Roberts, a retired High Court Judge (and member of St Bridget's), give his 'View from the Bench.' We had an entertaining afternoon when he told of some of the cases he had presided over in Liverpool Crown Court and the Old Bailey. Many questions were answered with humour. Thank you, John.

As it was Shrove Tuesday, we had Scotch pancakes with our cup of tea.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 10th March at 2 pm when Fred Aspbury, our ordinand, is coming to tell us about 'My Journey So Far.' Visitors are very welcome.

Carole Steel, Secretary

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March 2026 Diary

Our churches are open for visitors and as places of prayer & stillness
St Bridget's daily until 5pm, Caldy Church every day

**The Parish Office in St Bridget's Centre is open
Monday to Friday mornings, 9.30am–12.30pm**

The Rector's day off is a Monday
*For additional information about our activities, including occasional services
and events, please consult our website*

(www.stbridgetschurch.org.uk),

A Church Near You

www.achurchnearyou.com/St-Bridget-West-Kirby

www.achurchnearyou.com/All-Saints-Caldy

or the weekly newsletter, or phone the office (0151 625 2739)

Sunday 1st March SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

- 8am Holy Communion – St Bridget
- 10am Holy Communion – St Bridget
- 10am Service of the Word – Caldy
- 6.30 pm Stories of Encounter – St Bridget

Sunday 8th March THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

- 8am Holy Communion – St Bridget
- 10am Holy Communion – St Bridget
- 10am Holy Communion – Caldy
- 6.30pm Evening Prayer – St Bridget

Sunday 15th March MOTHERING SUNDAY

- 8am Holy Communion – St Bridget
- 10am All Together Worship – St Bridget
- 10am Holy Communion – Caldy
- 6.30pm Compline – St Bridget

Sunday 22nd March FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

8am	Holy Communion – St Bridget
10am	Holy Communion – St Bridget
10am	Holy Communion – Caldy
6.30pm	Evening Prayer – St Bridget

Sunday 29th March PALM SUNDAY

8am	Holy Communion – St Bridget
8am	Holy Communion – St Bridget with liturgy of the palms
10am	Holy Communion – Caldy
6.30pm	Evening Prayer – St Bridget

Regular and extra weekday services during Lent

Tuesday	10am	Holy Communion at Caldy Church
Wednesday	8.30am	Morning prayer at St Bridget's
Wednesday	11.30am	Holy Communion at St Bridget's
Thursday	7.30am	Holy Communion at St Bridget's
Thursday	9am	Morning Prayer on Zoom
Friday	9am	Morning Prayer streamed on Facebook
Friday	12 noon	Stations of the Cross at St Bridget's

Regular weekday activities

Tuesday	3.30pm	Toasty Tuesday in St Bridget's (term time)
	4.45pm	Sing Aloud junior choir practice (term time)
	6.00pm	Choir practice
	7.30pm	Bell ringing practice
Wednesday	8.30–11.30am	The Link Café – Centre
	10am	Knit & Natter, craft and chat group – Centre
Thursday	10am	Caldy Baby & Toddler Group (term time)
Friday	10am	St Bridget's Baby Group – Centre (term time)

Other regular activities

Second Tuesday of month	2pm	Mothers' Union in the Centre
Third Wednesday of month	12 noon	Men's Shed Lunch in the Centre
First Tuesday of month	7pm	Theology Discussion group at the Ring O' Bells
One Saturday each month	9.30–12 noon	Churchyard Working Party St Bridget's

FROM THE REGISTERS...

FUNERALS and BURIALS OF ASHES

"Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord"

10th February 2026	Eileen Wordley Spark (St Bridget & Landican)
15th February	Kathleen Cass Harper (burial of ashes at Caldly)
25th February	Robert Edwin Jones (St Bridget & Landican)
26th February	Nicholas Lean (Caldly & Landican)

Theology Discussion Group @ the Ring O' Bells

Dear All,

Following a wide-ranging and informative discussion of St. Paul and his works at February's meeting, the topic for next month is St. John, Apostle and Evangelist. **As usual, the meeting will be held in the 'upper room' of the Ring O' Bells on Tuesday, 3rd March at 7 pm.**

This link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTUZwqBmHGM> takes one to an interesting discussion about John, his life and work from a Catholic perspective. It assumes John wrote all the works conventionally attributed to him.

Dave Chester

PS Please do invite anyone else who you think would be interested.
[Dave can supply two additional pieces of background reading if you ask him]



Have you seen our tree?

This tree illustrates the mission and ministry in the parish. This month we focus on the **BUILDINGS TEAM AND ENHANCEMENT GROUP**

'my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that

my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there'.
2 Chronicles 7:14

Purpose

- To maintain worship spaces in a way which helps people to encounter God.
- To identify and respond to repairs and/concerns which need addressing
- To inform the PCC of work which needs undertaking
- To identify enhancements to buildings which can improve experience of worship
- To increase accessibility of buildings
- To ensure church buildings are safe

Following discussion, the PCC said that some of our reasons for being here as a church were:

- To provide a safe space to work and worship
- Provide space for sacramental worship
- To offer a quiet, reflective, sacred space
- Create a worshipful space so strangers coming in know God is there
- Care for buildings and land, so that we have something to pass on to future generations

We thank our Buildings Team and Enhancement group for all the work they undertake to help us achieve this.

ORGAN UPDATE

The latest news from Henry Willis & Sons about the St Bridget's organ is that the 41 Drawstop Solenoids [don't ask! Ed.] that were custom made to fit the console, have now been fitted. Jonathan said that some of the components they had received (the units for the General Pistons) weren't to their standards so were returned to the manufacturer and replacements are awaited.

Once one or two gremlins have been ousted from the newly made processor for the console, the console should be running it its own right. The other new processor will be in the organ chamber. A firm in Manchester has made these for Willis.

Jonathan said that there had been some delays in January because they have been waiting on other suppliers but they hope before long to be in church, cleaning the pipes and organ chamber prior to the rest of the restoration of the pipes and their control mechanism and the reinstatement of the console.

st bridget's weekend: the hotpot supper

At the end of January, we held a Hotpot Supper with home-grown entertainments (see page 16 for one of these) to celebrate St Bridget's day. Tickets sold out before the evening and around 70 people gathered in the centre.

The amazing and delicious food was prepared and served, as they say, by the ladies of the church (aka 'the young ones'). There was hotpot for all diets, followed by a choice of puddings and a drink of one's choice.

The entertainment was very varied, with songs, instrumental music, recitation of poetry, monologues, jokes and folk tales.

Our Treasurer later reported that, after expenses were deducted, the evening raised a fantastic £717.08 for the Foodbank.

Many thanks to everyone who organised the evening, cooked and served the food and drink and to all the performers.

Popery and ropery

SIR, – *A Roman Catholic, Irish republican, walks into an Anglican bell tower...*

Although that may sound like the opening of a corny joke it's the situation I found myself in seven years ago.

As David Byrne famously crooned: "How did I get here?"

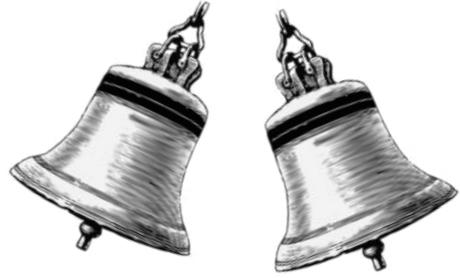
Almost a quarter of a century ago, our family emigrated from Ireland to the UK and after a couple of years in Manchester, relocated to the Wirral, a lovely spot wedged between the Mersey and Dee estuaries. We put our roots down in the community, enrolling our children in the local CofE school just up the road.

A decade later, during a weekly coffee morning in the school/church hall, I noticed a chap going around asking all the mums questions. As he approached, I could overhear him enquiring if they had ever thought about taking up bellringing and if not, would they consider it? Bracing myself for my turn, I was well-prepared: I'm afraid not. Roman Catholic; six years of boarding school in a Benedictine monastery; even served as altar boy for the pope. Besides, as the main child carer, I didn't really have the time.

After enlightening me that it is not a religious activity and that 'band practice' was once a week in the evenings with no obligations, I grudgingly agreed to drop by and see what it was all about (on the understanding that neither of us would take offense if we found the other too 'weird'!).

I enjoy old buildings and history and climbing the narrow spiral stone stairs up the belltower felt strangely familiar and exciting.

After brief introductions, I spent most of the first evening observing the chaotic pulling of ropes to intermittent barking of incomprehensible instructions, resulting in an awful cacophony of clanging bells. The tower captain provided some explanations of what



was going on and let me have a go at ringing a bell as well.

Seven years later, I have progressed from a complete novice to a reasonably competent basic ringer. I have little interest in progressing and learning new methods but do enjoy the sense of being part of a traditional community activity.

The funny thing is, I did (and still do) find them all 'weird' and have no doubt they view me even more so. That is one of the aspects I find so attractive.

I am constantly amazed how the tower accommodates to accept everyone as equals – from whatever walk of life, native or foreigner, novice or expert, young or old, regular and visitor alike. They don't even raise an eyebrow when my pacifist and egalitarian beliefs prevent me from joining in ringing to mark military or royalist events.

I have long forgiven the recruiter for 'false advertisement' when he said there was nothing religious about it. I do appreciate a spiritual quality in ringing the bells on a Sunday morning, letting the Lord know I'll be heading up to my local church for mass as soon as I'm done here.

Happy ringing everybody.

BRIAN LARSEN

West Kirby, Merseyside

We have a great team of bell ringers but need to train up new ringers to sustain this amazing skill. If you would like to know more please speak to Don Naylor our Tower secretary who can be reached on 0798 365 7859 email donhilbre@sky.com



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Here we
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involve
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everyone

Visit www.inclusive-church.org
to **join in & find out more**



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st bridget's tale

This poem/song (in the style of *Fairy Tale of New York* by the Pogues) was performed by Mary Railton-Crowder and Andrew Gibb at our recent St Bridget's Day celebrations (and written by Mary, we believe).

It was early years AD, back in old Ireland
That Bridget's tale began. A tale you'll want to hear
And so we sing a song, of times so long ago
About a servant girl, her deeds and miracles

She got a call from God. Came in as clear as day
She got a feeling of how her life would be
So Happy Bridget's Day and let us pray maybe
Her saintly life can shine a light for you and me

We've got tales, we've got ales, we've got stories of gold
Of her flame for the gospel, that never ran cold
When I first heard her tale on a cold winter's eve
I felt that St Bridget was speaking to me

She was humble, she was holy, the queen of the lowly
When beer finished flowing, they howled out for more
The party was swinging, and her cloak she was flinging
She turned water to beer and they danced through the night
*Chorus: And she kept the fire of faith alive from Cork to Galway Bay
And the bells are ringing out for Bridget's Day*

She was strong, she was brave, the abbess of Kildare
A healer, a poet, a woman of prayer
She cared for the poor and through her we can find
That blest are the merciful, gentle and kind. *Chorus*

She could have wed someone, well just like anyone
But she chose a life of faith, of service, love and prayer
We tell her stories still, we keep her memory
So raise your glasses high and pray St Bridget guides you. *Chorus*

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SAFEGUARDING

St Bridget's West Kirby and Caldy Church take the safety of everyone within our churches very seriously, and expect that everyone will work within the **safeguarding policy** of the parish, a copy of which can be found on our noticeboards.

If you are concerned about someone's safety or well-being contact:

- The Rector, Reverend Alex Williams, 0151 625 1052 rectorwestkirby@gmail.com
- The Parish Safeguarding Officer Rosemary Morgan 0782 1672232
safeguardingwestkirby@gmail.com
- The Diocesan Safeguarding Team 01928 718834 (option 4)
safeguarding@chester.anglican.org

IF SOMEONE IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER OR HARM, **CALL 999** AND ASK FOR THE POLICE.