

CENTREPIECE

August—September 2026

Free but donations are helpful



A Festival to Remember

4 years of fun and introducing Paul Howard

Your Church needs you!



The Collegiate
Church of

Saint ⊕ Mary
in Stafford

ASSOCIATE PRIEST & TOWN CENTRE CHAPLAIN:

Rev. John Davis 01785 661382
Email: john_davis19@sky.com

ASSOCIATE PRIESTS

Rev. Preb. Michael Newman 01785 660158
eileenandmichael@outlook.com

Rev. Pam Merriott 01889 883610
pamamerriott@gmail.com

LAY MINISTERS

Mr Philip Taylor 01785 780717
philip21taylor@gmail.com

PARISH ADMINISTRATOR /PARISH OFFICE

Mrs. Samantha Sagar 07593 928837
parishoffice@stmarysstafford.org.uk

For Baptisms and Weddings:
Please contact the Parish Administrator

SERVICES IN STAFFORD CHURCHES

Usual weekly services
The three Parishes Eucharist on Sundays
8.30am at Saint Chads
10.00am at Saint Mary's

Tuesdays at noon in St Mary's: suspended for the time being

Wednesdays at 11.00am in St Chad's Fridays at noon in St Chad's

First Sunday of the month at 10.00: a service at Saint Leonard's, Marston

There is a weekly newssheet sent out by email. If you are not receiving this and would like to, please contact the Parish Office.



From the Editors

This edition of Centrepiece is celebrating the fantastic Summer Arts Festival held at St Mary's. We hope that you came and enjoyed some of the events. and look forward to another one next year.

We introduce our new Churchwarden and wish him well in the role.

If you have something interesting to share with us —please do.
It's always nice to hear from different people.

Steve and Dee Turner

steveanddeeturner@yahoo.co.uk

From The Musing Ministers

Summer and Autumn

Here we are in the middle of the holiday season!

My father used to say crossly, in the two weeks in August when the church was shut, and our Minister took his annual leave,
'So God's on holiday again then!'

In some ways he was right. Many used it as an opportunity to just have a Sunday lie in,

But summer and autumn should not be a holiday from faith, instead it ought to be a time to stop and think. Longer days, and a break from the usual jobs, give us time to stand back from the frantic pace of life. It allows us time to appreciate the beauty of creation, a chance to spend with family and the space to make a deeper connection with God.

We read in Ecclesiastes. 'for everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven.'

And this time of the year we are treated to God's handy work in all its glory. The trouble is that many of us are so caught up in rushing from one thing to another that we have forgotten how to just be.

Jesus said, ‘consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin, yet even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Unfortunately, we treat rest as something we must earn, rather than a grace freely given by God. So, during this holiday season let’s follow his plan.

1. Rest

God ordained the Sabbath to teach us the rhythm of rest.

So, let’s step away from the daily grind for a while, breathe in the fresh air, listen to the bird song and immerse ourselves in the love of our Creator.

2. Reflect

As we walk in a park or sit in our gardens, let the sun warm our souls, let it become a sacred moment of quiet prayer, in the presence of God.

3. Relate

Let’s us use this precious time to reconnect with those people who mean the most to us. Lazy afternoons when we can share meals and hospitality, serving one another with love.

Let’s not use these wonderful months as an excuse to break from practicing our faith, but rather as a time to acknowledge all God’s blessings to us, to refresh our spirits and our souls, and renew us to continue His work in bringing His light, His peace and His love into every area of our lives and to the lives of others.

Wishing you all Every Blessing

Pam



4 Years of Fun

Four years can feel like a long time, but my past four years as Churchwarden at St Mary's have been both an honour and a remarkable insight into the life of the church behind the scenes. Services and events for the county town are often planned months in advance. When the Queen died, we created an amazing tribute that turned a moment of national sadness into a celebration of everything British. It was widely praised and will always hold a special place in my heart.

With God at the centre, being a warden means recognising that the ultimate boss is always present. It is not just about Sunday services; it also involves regulations, timing, tradition, pomp and ceremony. Whether in town or, in my case, at work, people often expect you to know everything.

Easter is the time of year when I truly reflect on my faith. As the first openly gay warden at St Mary's, I did question whether I should take on the role. But, as I often say, God makes us who we are, and we should embrace that. So, I said yes, and the welcome I received was amazing, beautiful, and warm. I hope I was able to show that same warmth to everyone I met, from the regulars on a Sunday morning to those who simply came in to pray. I did not take the decision to step down lightly, but with my work commitments, it was the right thing to do. Working with Sue has been such an honour, so I asked whether I could continue as a Deputy Warden (as well as the cleaner!) In truth, I love St Mary's, and, God willing, I hope to help with services most Sundays in some way and continue to serve God.



Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be part of this beautiful church and its history, which I have been privileged to capture through my photography.

God bless

Paul Milgate-Scarrott.

Introducing...Paul Howard

When I was asked to write this brief autobiography, my first reaction was “happy to do it” and soon afterwards “what on earth would they be interested in?”. I still can’t answer the second so I decided on a comprehensive account so you can take out the bits you’re interested in (feel free to ask questions later).

My life started a little over 70 years ago in Widnes, where I was fortunate to have a conventional, stable upbringing; my parents were hard-working and aspirational. They were church goers and I was soon introduced at St. Mary’s then St. Ambrose churches. Eventually spending many years in the choir and as an altar server.

I attended local schools, which I enjoyed. After school I studied Physics (Liverpool) and Materials Science (Greenwich).

I taught Physics for three years, decided it wasn’t for me and switched to Research & Development. I worked in Marconi’s central labs near Chelmsford and then at GEC’s technology centre in Stafford from 1986. Projects included semiconductor processing, glass-ceramic development and polymeric insulator development and high-voltage testing. I became a Programme Manager with responsibilities for many varied technology developments, management of laboratories & workshops and staff. I held this position until the technology centre closed and I was made redundant. I was the last one out and turned off the lights (on an institution that started in the early-1950s).

Rose and I were married nearly forty years ago at St. Ann’s church in Nantwich and we set up home in Stafford. Our two daughters, Liz and Mary, were born in the early 1990s. We have one grandchild, a boy aged 3, with another due in September. We often go to Spain for our annual holidays.

My interests have remained fairly constant over the years. I have played the guitar since boyhood and I am currently making a second attempt at the piano, having first learned in my 30s. I enjoy early jazz and blues, European concert music and the Beatles, of course. I like sport, mainly watching although I played tennis until a few years ago. I follow Manchester United (since I was 8 - it was fairly local and my uncle was a regular) and Stafford Rangers. I like spending time in the garden, doing a bit of DIY and I sometimes ride a vintage racing bike.

Back to the church - I lapsed as a teenager, due to the usual distractions, however I remember being a little envious of friends who had faith. I was drawn back, gradually at first then, in November 2024, I attended my first Sunday service at St. Mary's and was profoundly affected. I knew straight away that I had found my place - a homecoming.

Even before then, I had wanted to do more in retirement, especially after both my parents died and I had more time. At St. Mary's I made tentative steps to help out where I could and eventually the opportunity to become a churchwarden was presented.



My contribution initially has mainly been responding to the 2025 quinquennial inspection, which has thrown up a large number and wide range of repair and maintenance problems. I have also started to pursue external funding opportunities to pay for that work. As I learn more from Sue, the clergy team, Dave and Paul, I hope to become fully conversant with all aspects of the role.

Thank you all for welcoming me and entrusting me with this responsibility

A Festival to Remember

For just over two weeks this summer, St Mary's was filled with music, poetry, art, conversation, worship and, above all, people.

The 2026 St Mary's Arts Festival, with its theme "Building for Peace", was our fourth and most ambitious festival yet. Across more than 30 events, the church welcomed professional musicians and singers, local performers, poets, artists, craftspeople, peacebuilders, worshippers and visitors from Stafford and much further afield.

More than 1,300 visits were recorded during the festival, with people coming through the doors to attend concerts and workshops, to visit the church and enjoy the photography and art exhibitions. That figure does not include the hundreds of performers that filled the church with energy and passion. We also hosted our Building Peace Day, when the church became a place for serious and hopeful conversations about conflict, reconciliation and the practical work of peacebuilding.

The sheer variety of the programme was one of the festival's great strengths. We heard everything from folk music, jazz and brass bands to Baroque music, early instruments, organ, piano, harp, choral singing and intimate music for voice and lute. We welcomed internationally renowned performers alongside local musicians, young singers and community groups. The church rang with the sound of Foden's Band, the All Woman Choir and She, Jackie Oates, Filkin's Ensemble, Mercia Baroque and many others.

Our free lunchtime concerts once again proved enormously popular, offering people the chance to step inside St Mary's and encounter something beautiful in the middle of an ordinary day. Some came specifically to hear a performer they knew while others wandered in and stayed to listen. For many visitors, the festival was their first experience of St Mary's.

But the festival was about much more than concerts. People wrote poetry, embroidered doves of peace, drew and painted, sang together, listened to Shakespeare, encountered new art and reflected on what peace might mean in a troubled world. Our poetry competition attracted new writing inspired by the festival theme, while "An Act of Peace"

brought together poetry and music in an evening exploring how words can question, imagine and perhaps help to create peace.

At the heart of all this was the church itself. St Mary's is an extraordinary building, but during the festival it became more than a beautiful historic space. It became a meeting place: somewhere people could gather to listen, talk, create, worship, reflect and spend time together.

None of this could have happened without an enormous collective effort. We are especially grateful to the members of the festival committee, many of whom seemed almost to live in the church for those two weeks, and to the much wider group of volunteers and helpers who gave so generously of their time and energy. Our thanks also go to all the performers and artists who shared their work with us; to our sponsors and supporters; and to everyone who provided cakes, made tea and coffee, moved chairs, welcomed visitors, sold tickets, put up posters, arranged flowers, stewarded events and carried out the countless other tasks that made the festival possible.

The festival was also a financial success, enabling us to support the valuable work of Concordis International, the One World Group's support for Mercy Ships, and St Mary's Church itself. We are delighted that the enthusiasm and generosity surrounding the festival will have an impact beyond the events themselves, helping to support the work of peacebuilding, humanitarian care and the continuing life and ministry of St Mary's.

Most of all, thank you to everyone who came through the doors. A festival only truly comes alive when audiences turn up, and this year they did in remarkable numbers and with extraordinary enthusiasm.

The 2026 festival showed once again what St Mary's can be: not simply a magnificent building at the heart of Stafford, but a living, welcoming place where people come together through music, art, faith, creativity and conversation.

For a few remarkable weeks this summer, that is exactly what happened.

A View from the Church Kitchen

St Mary's Summer Festival finished in a blaze of glory with a performance by the internationally acclaimed Foden's Band. The vigour and precision of the conducting was utterly mesmerising. The band were often loud but every member worked together harmoniously and effectively.

" Building for Peace" was the festival theme. A peace banner had been created by the congregation and paper doves floated overhead. A display of photography by the Camera Club and paintings by Lisa Henderson further illustrated the theme. We do have so many talented people within our community and it's great to be able to celebrate what they have to offer.

A special mention must be made of the installation created by the Child of Mine Group. The 4000 knitted butterflies sent from across the nation were a powerful reminder of the joy of new life but also the pain endured at the loss of a child. Appropriately the installation was placed to frame the high altar in a church which is dedicated to Mary the mother of Jesus. Creativity of this sort is a way of finding peace and we wish the members every blessing as together they face the future.

" Fish from Oblivion " was we might say the festival house band. Members gave generously of their time and displayed their usual ingenuity in helping to explore the theme of peace. Where does the name come from and what about " Big Fish " and "Whale of a Time"? The imagination knows no bounds. Rumour has it that if the Clacton By-election is won by " Mr Fishfinger " (he is a real candidate) then "Fish from Oblivion " will be invited to sing in Trafalgar Square when the statue of Admiral Nelson is replaced by Captain Birdseye! We must trust that the date will not clash with the 2027 festival.

A lot more could be said about the many other performances. Each had its own character and each demonstrated that a prerequisite to good music of any style is that performers listen to each other and respect one another. This was particularly evident in William Byrd's 4Part Mass which was offered by St Mary's Choir during the Eucharist at the beginning of the festival and also the wonderful concert given by St Mary's Children's Choir later in the week.

The Committee and their many helpers must be congratulated on working so harmoniously with each other and our thanks must be extended to 1307 people who visited the church and attended the various events. It's also encouraging to know that after expenses about £5500 is going to be donated to charities including Concordis, Mer cy Ships and St Mary's Church.

The writer of this article was for much of the time confined to the church kitchen serving wine and washing up. This is not his usual occupation! It was however a privilege to be involved in the festival and the good news is that there are bottles of wine left over to launch the Christmas Tree Festival which begins 2nd December.

Michael Newman

A Child Of Mine Supporting Bereaved Parents

Our crochet group had a vision a few weeks ago, to have a display of crocheted butterflies for our National Bereaved Parents Day on 3rd July! We thought it was a great idea so we contacted our local church, St Mary's, and they said yes, and It would perfectly tie in with their arts festival around peace!

Then Kirsty had another idea that if we could get 2,557 butterflies it would represent every loss from early pregnancy through to adulthood within Staffordshire within one year! That's a lot.

We had a month to do this and it felt a little out of reach.

However, our amazing and Incredible community stepped up. We have received butterflies from Scotland. Cornwall and Wales to name but a few, and they still kept coming, from local knitting and crochet clubs, other charities and organisations. It has been just incredible to see and hear stories of those who lost many, many years ago when it was just pushed under the carpet and not spoken about, and now this was their way of giving back

This project has been emotional, amazing, beautiful and overwhelming all in one. We cannot thank our fabulous community for everything they have done to contribute to this project. But also, our wonderful army of volunteers who helped make this come to life and we couldn't have done it without you! It's been a long couple of days putting this together but I hope you'll agree it's the most poignant, inspiring and beautiful display. In honour of every bereaved parent who carries their child, baby or adult child only in their hearts. This is for them.



Thanks for the experience!

Having been lucky enough to sing in the St Mary's children's choir for a decade now, and attending the monthly family Eucharists, I assumed I knew all there was to know about the church. While my friends headed off to the law courts or to shadow doctors, I came to St Mary's to help out in this year's festival, Building for Peace.

On the school-mandated form I had put down wanting to learn about 'event organisation' and a slew of the vaguest skills my poor careers teacher has probably ever seen, covering up for the fact that when I stepped through the doors on Monday I knew I would have an open mind to offer and not much else. Thankfully, the week consisted of a lot less bureaucracy. Each morning I oversaw a couple of little tasks required to set the church up for the day's events with guidance from Sue, the church warden, the sole reason nothing I touched went up in flames.

On the first day I had the chance to participate in a discussion about the profession of mediation, in keeping with the theme of peace. It was incredibly inspiring to hear everyone's opinion, many of whom were in the field themselves. Mediation as a way to resolve conflict is something I had never been introduced to in formal education or experience. Both renowned speakers in the afternoon, Dr Keshavjee and Concordis International, demonstrated mediation's importance in bringing lasting peace, with higher consideration for all parties involved. As a young

person especially, being bombarded with disastrous headlines daily and the promised cost of living crisis coming for our adulthood and the rate of unemployment, it's easy to feel hopeless. It's very comforting to realise that good things can still happen in the world, but these good things take time and effort and people who can retain their hope.

The next few days, I gained knowledge in the serious, grown-up logistics of managing an event, including finances, advertisement and most importantly, using the coffee machine.

The lunchtime musical performances were consistently amazing, and it was lovely to see lots of people there, coming up for tea and coffee.

Something that really struck me was how much the church stands as a place of peace in the community. Its doors are open to all, from any walk of life, and its people are welcome and empathetic. Talking and understanding is in itself a skill.

My favourite part of the experience was the sheer variety of tasks I enjoyed throughout the week: nowhere else could you sing art madrigals, serve refreshments, and attend prestigious speeches in one week. Of course, there was also the joy of learning more about a place that is very close to my heart, and where I myself always feel at peace. It's been very special to help at the festival this year.

Biggest thanks to Sue for organising this opportunity, and everyone at St Mary's for all their support - making me feel quite useful, even when I probably wasn't!

Maggie



***We join together every week day morning
at 9 am online to say Morning Prayer and
we would love you to join us!***

***Just one day or five, and join just to listen
or to take part.***

It is a wonderful way to start the day!

Interested?

**Contact Rev. Pam Merriott (pamamerriott@gmail.com)
or Ruth Duffy. (r.m.duffy@me.com)**

A Message from Foden's Band

A fantastic evening last night as we had the pleasure of closing the St Mary's Arts Festival in Stafford for the second year running! Superb venue, acoustics and a very supportive and appreciative large audience. Thank you to Sue Savage and her team for organising another superb festival. We always enjoy returning and hope to be back again soon!

Foden's Band



**Dates for next
QUIET MONDAYS
at Shallowford House**

**14 September, 12 October
10.00 am to 3.30 pm**

a gentle day of devotion, quiet time and worship

£28 including lunch
To book call 01785 760233

Further information about these Quiet Days from Sheila Young

Building Peace from the Ground Up

It is now a feature of our festivals that we set some time aside to explore the festival theme with fellow-travellers and colleagues. This year, with my colleagues Anna Vollans and Philippa Johnson, I brought together academics, family mediators and international peace-builders to talk about what they have in common in “building peace from the ground up.”

In the morning we had discussions led by leading English family mediators, a brief academic perspective on “provention” provided by friend of the Festival, Dr David Dunn, an introduction to restorative practice with Carlie Norris, a short introduction to her voluntary work as a conciliator in the Ismaili community and in Afghanistan by Rukhsana Abdulla, and a challenging contribution from Svitlana and Tetiana, two of our Ukrainian mediator colleagues and friends who have settled with their families in England. Whether professionally involved in mediation or involved in our local community, we all explored what the key qualities of a mediator might be.

The afternoon contained two wonderful presentations, the first



being by internationally recognised cross-cultural specialist on family mediation Dr Mohamed Keshavjee, who spoke on “Mahatma Gandhi as Precursor of Transformative Mediation.” Mohamed brought the inspiration and hope of a wider and deeper perspective, and his talk was attended by the Mayor and Mayoress of Stafford, and supported by the Gandhi Foundation of Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, whose Chair, David Gengen, wrote to Sue with his thanks for the initiative.

Mohamed was followed by Kate Giles, the Fundraising and Communications Manager for Concordis International, a charity which equips community leaders in parts of Africa to be peace-

builders in their own community – **their promise being “to walk with communities for as long as it takes to build sustainable peace.”** Kate presented a new initiative by Concordis, to fund a peacebuilding process that will create profound change for communities on the border between Sudan and Chad, in an area called Um Dukhun.

Following the day, Kate wrote “I was touched by the heart and quality of the people you had with you. If peacebuilding in the UK sits with mediators, then there is much hope. And surely family mediation is the most crucial.”

The day, which was attended in total by 30-40 people, also included a great folk duo concert at lunchtime, and the amazing young Filkin’s Ensemble in the evening (with 114 in the audience). The day and Festival as a whole have been able to send Concordis £2500 towards the Um Dukhun project. If a key aim of the St Mary’s Festival is to connect and bring people together, this was a great example of the conversations we are able to initiate.

If I can reflect more widely for a moment, what an extraordinary achievement for a young festival not only to deliver on its determination to give excellent young artists a platform and to pay them properly, and to make some money for the church, but also to be able to demonstrate its commitment to the wider world by bringing people together and making financial contributions.



Concordis International: <https://concordis.international/concordis-donate>

Un Dukhun Project: <https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/campaign/seeing-it-through>

Neil Robinson, mediator and member of Festival Committee

Thanks, from the Gandhi Foundation



We thought you would be interested in seeing the letter of thanks received from the Gandhi Foundation.

Dear Mrs Savage

As President of the Pietermaritzburg Gandhi Foundation, South Africa, I send you my warmest wishes on your 2026 Peace Initiative, with my appreciation to you for placing Mahatma Gandhi's contribution to Transformative Mediation as an integral part of the programme.

This dimension of the Mahatma's life sadly is little known and we are so pleased to note that you have Dr Mohamed Keshavjee, a fellow South African and 2016 recipient of the Gandhi King Ikeda Peace Award, to make this presentation. I am also very pleased to note your colleague Neil Robinson's friendship with Dr Keshavjee and his colleague the late Henry Brown, a founder of the Family Mediators Association who was at one time lawyer to Mr Mandela in his early days at Robben Island.

Your noble initiative thus has resonance with us, as Mahatma Gandhi was both a lawyer as well as a mediator par excellence whose philosophy of Satyagraha (soul force) inspired moral giants such as the Rev. Martin Luther King Jnr and our own Nelson Mandela in their respective struggle for freedom from racism.

But, more than this resonance, your initiative has catalysed our resolve to consider coming to the UK for a conference on the unique contribution of these 3 moral giants of the 20th century. The first of these conferences was held at Stanford University in California in 2019, followed by the Gandhi Mandela King (GMK) conference at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa in 2023. The next GMK conference is scheduled for January 2027 in India, Gandhi's birthplace. It follows that a UK conference will complete the programme given that Gandhi spent two years there studying to become a lawyer, which influenced his earliest ideas about fairness and equity, reading the principles of Snell's Equity and imbibing the philosophy of John Ruskin, whose ideas formed the basis of his concern for the most marginalised in society.

If this intent crystallises, the Gandhi Foundation, together with the World House Network, hopes very much to collaborate with your Peace Initiative to publicise the work of these 3 moral icons whose philosophy has inspired millions throughout the world.

May I once again wish you all the best for your Building Peace Day, with our very best wishes to your Mayor and Mayoress, and with gratitude also to the civic and church authorities in Stafford who have made this unique endeavour possible.

Kind regards

David. D. Gengan

Electrician Service with a smile



**City & Guilds
Qualified**


NICEIC
APPROVED
CONTRACTOR

Fully qualified and
accredited, inc part P.

- Extra sockets, security lighting
- Replacement showers
 - Consumer Unit upgrades
- Landlord and home buyers' reports (EICR)

AWARD

Electrical

07737 187014
awardelectrical@gmail.com

Your Church needs you now

Every voice matters

Inspiring 18-25s to stand for election to General Synod

The Church is at a crucial moment in our life in so many ways: there is, despite the debate over figures, an undoubted generational shift in attitudes towards the Bible and the church and locally, we are in the early stages of realising our vision: Seeking the Kingdom. We are at a moment of so much challenge and opportunity. We need to grow our church, our ministry and our financial resources to fulfil our vision.

We need all hands-on deck!

A key part of our vision is to grow a younger church and to see younger people taking responsibility for our governance. It is obvious that young people should be encouraged to take an active role in every part of our church life. There are so many issues of crucial importance for our life, witness and worship that need fresh and new perspectives, rooted as always in the life of the church, our Christian beliefs and faith revealed in scripture and our worship together week by week.

As well as encouraging participation in parishes, in ministry and in chaplaincies, our church is governed by elected Synods. The General Synod is our elected national assembly, essential for shaping its direction and governance. Elections occur every five years, with the next elections between August and October this year.

Would you consider standing for election to General Synod?

General Synod considers and approves legislation for the entire Church of England, develops new forms of worship, discusses important national and international issues, and sets the annual budget for national activities. It has legislative authority – it is one of the few bodies in England authorised to make national laws through Measures that are approved by Parliament and the Monarch.

Candidates for the Synod are driven by their commitment to mission, governance, and pastoral care, aiming to influence policies on key theological and social matters, including social justice and environmental issues.

Drawn from among people across our worshipping communities and voted for by members local Deanery Synods, being a General Synod member means being ready to speak in debates, with clear sight about their views and the views we represent. This calls for determination, strong communication and negotiation skills and strength of character and conviction.

To be elected, candidates will need to plan, network and build support. Involvement in parish, deanery and diocesan activities helps establish a reputation that can lead to endorsements and votes.

Candidates should create a clear manifesto and set out their stall to resonate with potential electors, engage with voters, and build trust.

Synod is not all work. Among the 450 members lasting friendships develop, bringing sharing and support for each other's ministry.

Are you called to serve on General Synod? Are you ready for the challenge? Do you know someone who could represent our diocese? Ultimately, standing for General Synod is a call to serve the Church in shaping its mission and governance for today's world.

Tug Wilson has represented the Lichfield diocese at General Synod for twenty-one years and is active both locally and nationally in supporting the Church's mission and ministry.

Key dates for the 2026 General Synod election:

14 July Current General Synod dissolves;

14 August Nominations for New Synod open

Join the Journey of Growth

Someone once said "Not everything that counts can be counted" – and when it comes to our faith it is hard to see a way of 'measuring' where we are at with God. Indeed, do we need to?

Whilst the national church demands our attendance and finance figures (both essential to track), we might see our spiritual growth and deepening of our discipleship as equally – or if not more - important to consider.

The Church Development Tool is a refreshed online survey tool which can help whole congregations better understand themselves and how they feel about their faith.

Launched on 1 June, it is free, anonymous and now housed on the Online Parish Returns platform. It can enable congregations to have their voice heard about the life and ministry of the church and includes modules on diversity, children & young people, lay ministry, giving and discipleship.

With only 22 questions in total, even a church conducting all six modules will find it quick and easy to administer and gather the results from. You can then run it twelve months later for example and compare the results to monitor your journey.

In my role as Whole Life Discipleship Officer, I was particularly interested in the discipleship module – thought-provoking questions such as ‘How often do you pray?’ and ‘to what extent you feel you have someone you trust to share questions about God’ prompted me to reflect personally - irrespective of any wider results. So as a diocese we offered to help pilot the ‘CDT’ with a few churches to gather feedback on the process and the questions – then suggest tweaks – to help those at Church House developing this nationally.

If you are interested in running the survey at your church, see the link below for more information. It could be as a one-off snapshot or as part of a wider development piece – either way please do get in touch with me and I can set that up for you. I can even come and talk it through with church leaders / PCC if that is helpful. I am excited to see what this survey can do to support our churches to celebrate what is going well – and identify areas ripe for development. Whilst our walk with God is never straightforward or something we can quantify easily; my prayer is that the Church Development Tool is a means of us all joining in the journey forward – together. You never know, it might even lead to more souls in our services praising God with us.

Helen Emery, Whole Life Discipleship Officer



R N Clarke

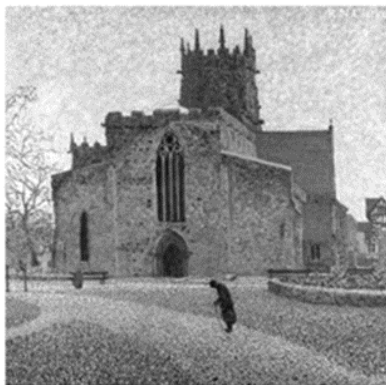
Paintings, drawings and
watercolours of
R N Clarke

Gallery address

R N Clarke Fine Art
Suite No1, St Mary's Mews,
St Mary's Place,
Stafford ST16 2AP

The Gallery is **Open by Appointment**
please telephone 07874 708372
or email
richard.n.clarke@outlook.com

The Gallery also holds occasional
Open Days



You're invited



HAND MORGAN & OWEN

Our Services

Private Client

- Wills & Probate
- Inheritance Tax Planning
- Capital Gains Tax

Property

- Agricultural Law
- Commercial & Residential

Business & Commercial

- Company & Commercial Law
- Debt Recovery

Dispute Resolution

- Accident & Injury Claims
- Employment Law

Visit or Contact us:

Stafford Office:
17 Martin Street, Stafford, ST16 2LF
01283 211 411

Rugeley Office:
3 Albion Street, Rugeley, WS15 2BY
01889 583 871

Online:
www.hmo.co.uk

Plumbing & Heating Specialists

Heating

- Boiler Maintenance, Repairs and Installations
- Landlord Gas Certificates
- Radiator Installation
- Gas, LPG and Oil Systems
- Thermostat and Smart Control Installation
- Power Flushing and Heating Cleanse

Plumbing

- Tap Repairs and Installation
- General Plumbing
- Bathroom Installation
- Water Leak Investigation and Repair
- Shower Installation
- Unvented Cylinder Maintenance, Repairs and Installation



Call: 01785 241135

Email admin@parsons-plumbing.co.uk

Parsons Plumbing & Heating Ltd, Unit 3 Baswich Business Park,
Tilcon Avenue, Stafford, ST18 0YL

William Emery & Sons

A Family Tradition
Established 1890

24 Hour Service

Tel: 01785 251205

The Laurels
13 County Road
Stafford
ST16 2PU



Independent Family Funeral Directors
www.emerys.co.uk

Saturday Morning Coffee Concerts at St Mary's



September 12th

Chris Gumbley (piano)

September 26th

St Mary's Miscellany

All concerts begin at 11.00am

Doors open 10.30am when tea and coffee will be available.

All welcome. Admission free but donations gratefully received.



We meet at the Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, usually on the third Tuesday in the month.

Lectures start at 1.45pm.

Membership for the year from 1st April costs just £60 giving access to 10 lectures.

Guest attendance fee for introductory lecture - £10

Next lecture:

October 20th 2026

Beauty in truth. The past, present & future of

Botanical Illustration

Lecturer Timothy Walker

www.theartssocietystafford.org.uk

The Soup Kitchen



This beautiful 16th Century eating house offers the ideal place to meet your friends and is described in The Times as “Stafford’s hidden gem”. Visitors from all over the world regularly return and comment ‘there is nowhere else that compares in atmosphere, traditional old-fashioned service and genuine warm welcome which is unique to Stafford’s Soup Kitchen

Church Lane Antiques



A wide selection of antiques for sale, including furniture, pictures, pottery, glass, silver and jewellery.

We are always interested in buying; from single items to house clearance.

32 Mill Street
Stafford ST16 2AW

Tel: 07770 870140 or 07795 023857

Email: lizlyd@googlemail.com

Open Friday & Saturday
10am-4pm

CHURCH CONTACTS

St. Mary's

Churchwardens Sue Savage
Paul Howard

Bellringers Selwyn Jones 242116

One World Group Pauline Roycroft 244556

Julian Meeting Sheila Young 252023

Director of Music..... Margaret Outen....253182
Email: margaretouten@hotmail.co.uk

Planned Giving Secretary.... Chris Bown.... 07804 595964
Email: chrisbown@btinternet.com

St. Chad's

Churchwardens Ian Carr.....07714913079
Carla Lewis

St. Leonard's

Churchwarden Gail Wray01889 271176

WEBSITES:

Website for StaffordChurches: www.staffordchurches.uk

St Mary's Website: www.stmarysstafford.org.uk

St. Chad's Website: www.stchadsstafford.co.uk

Why not follow us on Twitter? @staffordchurch

Facebook: staffordchurches.uk

MAGAZINE EDITOR:

Steve and Dee TurnerTelephone 01785 229437
Email steveanddeeturner@yahoo.co.uk

FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S

Dee Turner 01785 229437
Email: friendsofstmary@gmail.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/friendsofstmary



A Festival to Remember



Contributions to Centrepiece

If you would like to advertise an event, comment on one you have attended or just share something interesting with us – then please do so.

Email us at: steveanddeeturner@yahoo.co.uk

Deadline is about ten days before the first Sunday of the month.