

Martin's Message



PLACES in the Bible

'All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players,' is a famous quote from Shakespeare's 'As You Like It'. The places where life's events are acted out make up different parts of this grand stage and take on a special significance for us.

We take pride in whether we are Northerners, Southerners or from the Midlands. I remember the spot in Cambridge where I gave my wife her engagement ring and we still mention it whenever it appears on TV. Some places we warm too, some not. We mark some places with memorials and special plaques.

In our All-age worship services this year (which take place on the first Sunday of the month in both our churches) our theme is 'Places in the Bible'. We aim to bring to life the sounds, smells and look of these places, so do join us as together we find out more.

I remember the excitement I felt when I visited Athens and stood for the first time in a place where an event recorded in the Bible 'took place'. There, in the Areopagus, in the second half of the first century, the apostle Paul told the elders of Athens about Jesus (see Acts 17 v 16-34).

SAINTS *alive*

It reminds us that the events of the Bible aren't fairy stories that happened 'once upon a time in a faraway land' but are rooted in real places at a particular time in history.

It is in these often-ordinary places where people had extraordinary encounters with the living God. It is the ordinary places which form the stage of our lives and where we too encounter the living God. Ordinary places then become extraordinary places.

It fills me with excitement as I consider where I may encounter the living God because all the world is His stage too.

Martin Castle – Priest-in-charge

Children, Young People and Families Worker

Are you looking for an exciting opportunity to work with children, young people and families? If you are (or know someone who is), check out the advert for the post that SS&SJ are currently advertising. This paid role will initially involve working with the two Church of England Schools in Earl Shilton as well as SS&SJ Church, to enable children, young people and families to grow in their spiritual lives through the Christian faith. For more details see the following link:

<https://www.leicester.anglican.org/job-vacancies/children-young-people-families-cypf-worker--earl-shilton.php> or get in touch if you have any questions.

SS&SJ BELL RINGERS



l/r Laura, Sam, Jill, Elaine, Terry, Alastair

Yesterday we rang a successful quarter peel at the church in 43mins. It was the first time since 2004 that we have had a full Earl Shilton's St Simon & St Jude's band ring a successful quarter peel.

FEBRUARY SERVICES

Sunday 1st February

9.15am – All-age Worship at St Mary's
10.45am – All-age Worship at SS&SJ
6.30pm – Prayers to end the day on Facebook

Sunday 8th February

9.15am – Holy Communion at St Mary's
10.45am – Holy Communion at SS&SJ
6.30pm – Prayers to end the day on Facebook

Sunday 15th February

9.15am – Morning Worship at St Mary's
10.45am – Morning Worship at SS&SJ
6.30pm – Prayers to end the day on Facebook

Wednesday 18th February

7.30pm – Ash Wednesday Service at SS&SJ

Sunday 22nd February

9.15am – Holy Communion at St Mary's
10.45am – Holy Communion at SS&SJ
10.30am – Sunday Club in the SS&SJ Parish Hall

Prayers to start the day at 9am as follows:

Monday – St Simon and St Jude's
Tuesday & Thursday – St Mary's
Wednesday – Facebook

See weekly notice sheet for any changes

St. Mary's Subscription Club

LUCKY NUMBERS

Lucky membership numbers and prize monies at the December event were as follows:

1st **25**(£40), 2nd **1**(£25),
3rd **152**(£15), 4th **163**(£10)
and 5th **181**(£10).

Next Draw:

Saturday 31st January 2026
at Elmesthorpe Village Hall
EFFFI Coffee Morning
10.00-11.30

The theme is 'Burns Night
Bingo' Please wear something
Tartan.

Donations always welcome for local
Food Banks

If you wish to get in touch please contact the church office:

Parish Church Office at St Simon & St Jude
Church Hall, High Street. Earl Shilton,
Leicestershire. LE9 7DH 01455 843961
parishchurch@gmx.co.uk

If you would like to contact our church minister his contact details are as follows:

Revd Martin Castle
(Priest-in-charge)
07759 002660
revdmartincastle@gmx.com



www.achurchnearyou.com/St-Mary-Elmesthorpe
www.achurchnearyou.com/St-Simon-St-Jude-Earl-Shilton
www.achurchnearyou.com/Earl-Shilton-with-Elmesthorpe

WHY I AM STILL A CHRISTIAN

Like someone banished from the castle in TV's "The Traitors" the author of a new book declares: "I am and always have been a Faithful".

In "Why I'm Still A Christian" (SPCK) podcaster Justin Brierley explains the reasons he still believes after two decades of hearing the opposite views. For the purposes of the book Brierley, host of the radio show "Unbelievable" in which he refereed debates between a person of faith and either an atheist or sceptic, the broadcaster has abandoned the fairness and balance he had to have for those 20 years.

He carefully dismantles all the arguments against including those from people like Richard Dawkins and Philip Pullman whom he respects but, by mutual agreement, says they agree to disagree.

However, WISAC is more than just about that debate. Brierley deals with those who have lost their faith, "exvangelists", the deconstruction involved and attempts to rebuild. He even has a word for some Christians: "Like the Star Wars collector who keeps his original 1979 Millenium Falcon toy pristine and unopened in its box and has never actually played with it, too many are guilty of spending more time arguing for the truth of their faith than experiencing its living reality.

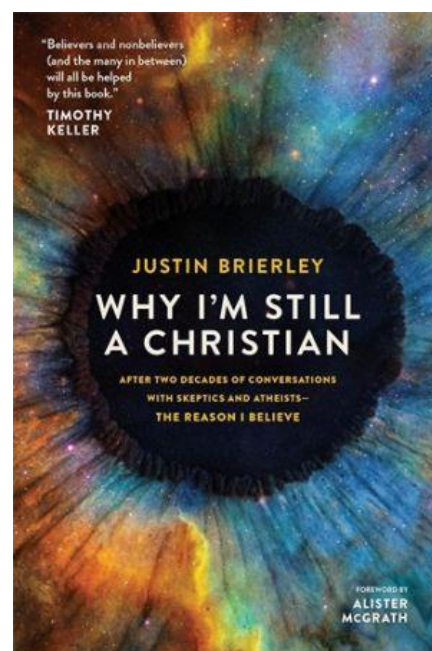
"I would rather have Christians with imperfect theology who love people in the name of Christ than believers with perfect theology whose faith is hermetically sealed from actually making a difference."

As one reviewer commented: "Believers, nonbelievers (and the many in between) will all be helped by this book."

It can be ordered through The Vine Christian Bookshop and Coffee Bar on The Borough, Hinckley.

Why not pop in to browse their books and have a hot drink or light lunch?

Mitch Irving



Podcasts

If you are into your podcasts, then Christian themed podcasts abound. Justin Brierley (author of 'Why I'm Still a Christian') is currently a host on the Re-enchanting Podcast found on the Seen and Unseen website: <https://www.seenandunseen.com/podcast>. Premier Unbelievable (part of Premier Christian Radio) states that their podcasts aim to get 'Christians, sceptics and thinkers together for honest conversations on faith, science, ethics and culture', which sounds like a refreshing approach in a polarized world. They have a section of podcasts aimed at youth.

See <https://www.premierunbelievable.com/> Finally, if you want to delve deeper into Christian belief then you might find Premier's 'Ask NT Wright anything' helpful. Of course, there are so many more on worship, music, church... if you come across one you think is good, let us know. Martin

A Message from Laura

'I just want to say thanks to everyone who helped decorate the Church for Christmas - the choir and everyone involved. It looked wonderful.'

thank you!

