

IN TOUCH

Hanley Team Ministry

SEPTEMBER 2026



**Seeking the next
Bishop of
Lichfield**



**Diocesan Secretary
Sam Rushton**

PARISH MAGAZINE



Seeking a new Rector – Back to the drawing board

Marriage laws to change?

**Back to school – Pupil Term dates
2026- 2027**

How can a Christian be a scientist?

**NIGHTWATCH – discover night-time
nature living in your
neighbourhood**



**Anne Warrillow and Winnie Wilshaw
on quite different holiday experiences**



Peter Shore has a gospel to proclaim

**Uncle Eustace
on what clergy should wear on their feet**

SEPTEMBER DIARY

Events in bold take place each week but check with organisers, particularly around school term dates

Mondays	Cobridge Kiddies	Christ Church	10.00
Tuesdays	Lunch Club	Christ Church	12.00
Wednesdays	Places of Welcome	St. Luke's	08.30
	Open Door	St. Mark's	09.30-13.30
	'Drop-In'	Christ Church	10.00
	Baby & Toddler Group	St. Luke's	13.00
	Over 55s	St. Matthew's	13.30
Thursdays	Place of Welcome	St. Mark's	08.30
Fridays	Open Door	St. Mark's	09.30-12.00
Last Sunday	Bubble Church	St. Luke's	15.00
Monday 7 th .	Birches Head Residents' Association, incl. AGM	St. Matthew's	19.15
Saturday 19 th .	Coffee Morning & Lunch / Bingo	St. Matthew's	10.00 12.00
Sunday 20 th .	TEAM EUCHARIST	St. Matthew's	10.00

SUNDAY READINGS IN SEPTEMBER

6th. The Fourteenth Sunday After Trinity (Proper 18)

Exodus 12: 1-14 Rom. 13: 8-14 Matt. 18: 15-20

13th. The Fifteenth Sunday After Trinity (Proper 19)

Gen. 50: 15-21 Rom. 14: 1-12 Matt. 18: 21-35

20th. MATTHEW, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST

(The Sixteenth Sunday After Trinity (Proper 20))

Prov. 3: 13-18 2 Cor. 4: 1-6 Matt. 9: 9-13

27th. The Seventeenth Sunday After Trinity (Proper 21)

Ezek 18: 1-4, 25-32 Phil. 2: 1-13 Matt. 21: 23-32

Hanley St. Luke's CE Academy Pupil Term Dates 2026-2027

Autumn Term 1

Inset Days Tuesday 1st September 2026

Wednesday 2nd September 2026

School opens for pupils Thursday 3rd September 2026

School closes at 3.15pm Wednesday 21st October 2026

Inset Days Thursday 22nd October 2026

Friday 23rd October 2026

Half Term Holiday Monday 26th October – Friday 30th October 2026

School opens for pupils Monday 2nd November 2026

Autumn Term 2

School closes 3.15pm Friday 18th December 2026

Christmas Holidays Monday 21st December to Friday 1st January 2027

Spring Term 1 2027

School opens for pupils Monday 4th January 2027

School closes at 3.15pm Friday 12th February 2027

Half Term Holiday Monday 15th to Friday 19th February 2027

Inset Day Monday 22nd February 2027 Trust Training Day

Spring term 2

School opens for pupils Tuesday 23rd February 2027

School closes at 3.15pm Thursday 25th March 2027

Easter Holidays Friday 26th March to Friday 9th April 2027

Summer Term 1 2027

School opens Monday 12th April 2027

Bank holiday Monday 3rd May 2027

School closes at 3.15pm Friday 28th May 2027

Half Term Holiday Monday 31st May to Friday 4th June 2027

Summer Term 2

School opens for pupils Monday 7th June 2027

School closes at 3.15pm Tuesday 20th July 2027

Inset day Wednesday 21st July 2027 Summer Holidays Thursday 22nd July 2027

SEEKING THE 100TH BISHOP OF LICHFIELD

Sam Rushton

*Diocesan Secretary and CEO of Lichfield Diocesan Board of Finance,
and Secretary to the Vacancy in See Committee*

Saying goodbye

As you read this article, Bishop Michael's retirement on the feast day of St Michael and All Angels will either be imminent or recently past. It has been a long goodbye, sometimes sad but often filled with joy and happy memories. Many have said how much they will miss his wisdom, his kindness and his pastoral heart.

Taking a snapshot

It has been difficult for some to engage with the idea of seeking the 100th Bishop when the 99th has still been so present but in October the diocese will 'hand in its homework' to the national church – just like when there is a parish vacancy, we have to write our 'diocesan profile' (known as the Statement of Needs) for the Crown Nominations Committee (CNC), the small group who will work together to discern the potential candidates for #Lichfield100. The CNC group comprises fourteen people: two archbishops, six people appointed by General Synod and six people nominated by the diocese. This group needs a clear brief from us: what is Lichfield like as a diocese, what are our joys and hopes, what are the challenges and who are we looking for to help us to become all that we can be. A group called the Vacancy in See Committee has been putting the Statement of Needs together on behalf of us all, asking those questions of various groups in June and July this year and collecting that wisdom together in one document.

Your voice matters

But the CNC also want to hear from the people of Lichfield directly. Between 5 and 15 October, the Archbishops' Secretary and the Prime Minister's Secretary for Appointments will be meeting with a number of invited groups looking for answers to similar questions. And everyone will have a chance to speak directly into the process of discernment.

There will be an **online meeting on the evening of 14 October, 6pm-7.30pm to which everyone is invited**. There will be more information on how to join on the diocesan website or you can follow this link:

lichfield.anglican.org/vacancy-in-see/

Your voice really does matter. So far the most frequent two words we've heard in our consultations for our 'diocesan profile' have been 'huge' and 'diverse'. We can't show people from outside just how big and diverse we are unless they hear lots of different voices from lots of different communities – rural Shropshire, Black Country, Stoke, accents with a touch of Caribbean sunshine or south-east Asian music, all joyfully putting in their two penn'orth. So come and have your say! Who knows, it might be your voice which makes all the difference in discerning the right person to be our next Bishop.

Sam Rushton

Practical use of AI – Guidance for Churches

AI Guidelines for Christian Ministry has been produced by the AI Christian Partnership (AICP), a not-for-profit organisation made up of Christian groups, theologians, technologists, and academics. Its founder, Chris Goswami, says it is important to stop AI just 'gradually seeping into church life without proper discussion.'

AI Guidelines are 'aimed at church ministers, leaders, and volunteers, but also contain principles, ethics, and practical tips that all Christians can apply and use.' The Guidelines help you to use AI to enhance all aspects of your church life; from sermons, prayers, liturgy, and worship songs to wider ministry in pastoral care, small groups, and church meetings. AI can also work in a church's back office, in its communications, data, and policy creation.

AI Guidelines for Christian Ministry can be downloaded for free at www.aichristian.org/guidelines.

Parish Pump

Building Management Portal

The Online Faculty System (OFS) currently used for church buildings permissions is being replaced by the Church of England's new Building Management Portal (BMP). The OFS will close on 30 September and the BMP will be 'launched' on 6 October. Full details have been circulated to the PCC. If you cannot contain your enthusiasm, further information is available in the BMP guidance on the diocesan website. Contacts are Giles (DAC Secretary) and Felicity (DAC Casework Officer) at the Lichfield DAC Office.

Weddings: Government consultation on making them more flexible and cheaper

Couples will soon be able to marry almost anywhere, including forests, beaches, canal boats, and at home, under Government proposals that ‘shift the focus from bricks and mortar to people and promises’. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is to consult on plans to allow ‘*authorised officiants*’ of any religion or belief to conduct weddings, in what are being described as the most radical changes to marriage law in England and Wales since the 19th century. The Government says, however, that the ‘*permanence*’ of marriage will be strengthened by enabling more questioning of candidates before their weddings. *‘To protect against forced, predatory and sham marriages, couples must complete a two-stage process, including in-person interview, to verify their identity and demonstrate eligibility to marry.’*

Anglican banns of marriage would continue ‘*as an important part of the established Church*’, the document says. It continues: *‘The Government agrees with the Law Commission’s recommendation that Anglican weddings should continue to be conducted as they are now. It recognises the unique role of the Church of England in relation to marriage and has no plans to alter that.’*

The MoJ says that the proposals will reduce costs. The average wedding in England costs more than £20,000 and venue hire alone typically costs around £6,000 – before any food. About 470,000 people marry in England and Wales each year. Anglican weddings are generally required to take place in a church or chapel, although they can take place in a private home by special licence.

Attending a wedding for the first time, a little girl whispered to her mother, “Why is the bride dressed in white?”

“Because white is the colour of happiness, and today is the happiest day of her life.”

The child thought about this for a moment, then said, “So why is the groom wearing black?”

Parish Pump

Caring for God's Acre NightWatch

Kaitlyn Elverson

As the sun sets over our churchyards and burial grounds, a whole other world comes alive. Using some nifty technology, we can listen in on this hidden world to find out just what kind of wildlife is thriving there.

At Caring for God's Acre, we've recently acquired a fantastic bit of kit called passive acoustic monitors. These little devices can be set up to record and monitor a whole range of sounds in environments that would otherwise be difficult to survey, helping to discover what species are about. For instance, we've been using our acoustic monitor to survey bats in local churchyards.

The devices can be left out for a few hours, days or even weeks. They utilise a small microphone to detect and convert incoming sound waves into a signal which can be recorded and stored for later analysis. Once back at home, you can then download the data to analyse and see what species you've heard. Some models will do this for you, some won't; it entirely depends on the model.

Bats use echolocation to hunt for insects at high frequencies that we humans can't hear. Individual species emit calls that correspond to their size, flight, behaviour, environment and prey types. Each will produce a distinctive call that can be recognised on the acoustic monitor or during sound analysis.

Our friends at Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) have made surveying for bats accessible and easy for everyone. BCT has been running the National Bat Monitoring Programme since 1996. Through its various mediums, all the recorded data helps inform bat conservation across the UK. One part of the programme is the NightWatch survey. Taking place between July and October, NightWatch is a community science project helping you discover the hidden world of night-time nature living in your neighbourhood.

No experience or previous knowledge is needed to take part, just for you to be over 16 and have a windowsill, garden, churchyard or urban space you have permission to survey. They greatly encourage people in towns and cities to get involved, so we can monitor how bats are faring in urban areas.

The process is simple. Choose a date and book your kit via the survey portal. Next, a free kit arrives in the post including an “AudioMoth”. This is your mini passive acoustic monitoring device! Switch it on, secure in place and you’re ready to go. Once you’re done, post the kit back in the post and wait to hear back from BCT with your personalised report of the bats you discovered during the survey.

More information on how to sign up and book your kit is linked here:

<https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/science-research/passive-acoustic-surveys/nightwatch>

HARD TIMES

Do you remember rock? I do not mean the music, but the confectionary sticks sold at seaside resorts, pink cylinders about a foot long and an inch wide with a white centre, with the name of the place in letters. They were covered in film and had a small label with a picture of the place on it. They were hard as, well, rock, and very difficult to eat. Real teeth breakers. One source says it started at fairgrounds in the 19th Century, when sugar was plentiful and inexpensive. It was not brightly coloured or lettered in those days, but it was of a similar shape and size as it is today. Ben Bullock was an ex-miner from Burnley, who conceived the idea whilst holidaying in Blackpool. He began producing sticks of brightly coloured lettered candy at his Yorkshire-based sweet factory in 1887. He sent his first batch of lettered rock to retailers in Blackpool, where it was well received. Other sources say it was invented by a Victorian character by the name of Dynamite Dick, who came from either Morecambe or Blackpool.

David Pickup

My Summer Holiday

Anne Warrillow

Well, I have been badgered by the editor to write about my month away from home. He wanted something light-hearted. Unfortunately, there was not much amusing about a four week stay in the Haywood Hospital resulting from having a broken hip and pubic bone.

I won't go into details of long waits following my fall; they are similar to the experiences of other people. My two nights in a corridor at A & E was a much better experience than I had been led to believe and I didn't feel neglected. At the Haywood I was appalled at the extreme exhaustion and shortage of staff and equipment in general.

The highlight of my stay was an afternoon when four generations of my family were joined by Graham and Margaret in one of the gardens. I listened to lively conversations between my nine year old great granddaughter and Graham about the merits and demerits of Port Vale and Stoke. I had been wheeled to the garden in a wheelchair which had only one brake! I had visions of going round and round in circles.

One night the control that alters the position of my bed became disconnected. Three staff members were lying under the bed laughing, trying to fathom out how to reconnect it. When it happened again a few nights later they decided that mine was an old bed and replaced it with a newer one.

A few nights later the lock on my medication drawer broke. A man appeared at my bedside at 1.00 a.m. to repair it.

On a couple of occasions my call button was left hanging on the wall after I was in bed. Luckily I had become friendly with the lady in the next bed, who was still awake, so she called for help on my behalf. We also shared her television and were able to watch quite a lot of Wimbledon and two England games in the world cup, but staying awake for those was a bit of a problem.

I am home now with carers. Quite a lot I can say about that next time.

HOLIDAY REPORT – A TRIP TO KRAKÓW

Part Two

Winnie Wilshaw

Just to the South of the Old Town in Kraków, lies the Jewish Quarter also known as Kazimierz where various Synagogues and Basilicas (Cathedrals) and even a Catholic monastery exist very happily together.

Over the Wisla River, though, was very different during WW2.

Around the area known as Podgórze, a wall was built in which to confine all Jews from the area and beyond.

Jews were sent there for selection, to work in the factories, and to be sent for extermination at the various concentration camps dotted around, though of course they didn't realise that.



There are now 70 metal seats embedded in concrete around what is known as Heroes Square. Each seat represents 1,000 Jews who were executed.



Also in Podgórze is the Schindler Factory.

Oskar Schindler, a German businessman, saved about 1,200 Jewish people during World War II. He used his enamel and shell factories in Poland and the Czech Republic to keep his workers safe from the death camps.

Next month, I will be writing about Auschwitz and Auschwitz-Berkenau



AROUND & ABOUT

Jenny Wiggins' granddaughter, Ella, made a lion mask at one of the St. Matthew's Holiday Clubs. Ella likes tackling our magazine Wordsearches (page 15, Ella)



Easter balloons around Holy Trinity Church, Northwood, proclaimed that Jesus is Alive. We gave one to Bishop Matthew, too. Church Warden Glenys Paterson holds one of the balloons that is still going strong well into the Sundays after Trinity.



St Augustine Brookland
Ad Meskens, Wikimedia
Commons
See '*Summoned By Bells*'

For the year 2025/26 the Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank supported on average 1,500 people each month. The need to re-stack warehouse supplies is high in order to prepare for the months ahead. Reflections on the meanings of harvest, written by people who have used foodbanks, stories of hospitality and gratitude, can be viewed at trussell.org.uk/harvest

Holden Lane Angling Club held a community event in August, asking people their views on improvements made over the past 12 months and what else they would like to see.



Rev. Gill Shilkoff presents Mel Bourne with a special birthday cake (there was an '0') at Holy Trinity. On the same day, we sang 'Happy Birthday' to Gary Hayes, at 35 one of our younger church members. We sing to all upon their birthdays, renditions varying in quality and appreciation.



Harvest appeal

If you can, please donate an item or two from the list to help local people in need: -

- Tinned Meat/Fish
- UHT Milk
- Tinned Pudding
- Tinned Veg/Fruit
- Pasta Sauce
- Tinned Tomatoes
- Mash
- Teabags size 40 bags
- Fruit Juice
- Coffee
- Sweet Extra i.e. chocolate
- Cereal

Thank you for your help and supporting us to help people in this city who are in crisis.

HE GAVE US EYES TO SEE THEM SUMMONED BY BELLS

Rev. Michael Burgess

'*Summoned by Bells*' is the title of John Betjeman's poetic autobiography, where he describes how bells summoned him to school and to church. Bells announcing the joy of weddings and Sunday services; and also marking out times of sadness and the death of loved ones.

One of the strangest bell-towers is at St Augustine's Church, Brookland in Kent, north-east of Rye. It was originally built in the medieval period, and now stands as a triple coned, wooden, octagonal tower detached from the church, and clad with shingles in 1936. The story is that the tower looked down at a beautiful bride about to marry an unpleasant groom: it was such a surprise that the tower jumped off the church in shock. The truth is that the church was built on marshy ground, and a stronger foundation was needed for the bells. So the tower was built north of the church. See the picture on page 11.

Like all belfries and steeples, it is an impressive witness to the place of bells in human life and work: as time-keepers, announcing both festive occasions and emergencies, and calling people away from more worldly pursuits to worship. That is why bells have always been blessed at their installation, for their true function is to ring out the harmony of heaven.

The tenor bell at Warburton Church in Cheshire is inscribed with the words, '*I bid you to the house of prayer. St Werburgh's hallowed name I bear. Good folk draw near and humbly pray, as prayed that saint in olden day.*'

As a little boy, John Betjeman would listen to the bells with his teddy bear, Archibald. '*I heard the church bells hollowing out the sky, deep beyond deep, like never-ending stars.*' For him, for the people of Brookland, and for all of us, the bells were like stars lighting up the sky with faith and joy and praise.

How can a Christian be a scientist?

Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge.

I used to ask this question as a student. I wondered what it was like to have a career in science, and how being a Christian might make a difference. Eventually I met a good number of successful scientists who were sincere Christians, and I learned that science and faith are a great combination. Dr Francis Collins, former Director of the project to decode the whole of human DNA, wrote that it is “possible for the scientist-believer to be intellectually fulfilled and spiritually alive, both worshipping God and using the tools of science to uncover some of the awesome mysteries of His creation.”

Although our beliefs may affect what we notice about the world and how we interpret our data, they don't affect the outcome of the experiments themselves. If a Muslim and a Christian drop the same ball from the same height under identical conditions, it will fall at the same speed. This means that a scientist can be respected by her colleagues for doing good work, regardless of what she believes and what her colleagues think of her worldview.

Science is an exercise in observing and measuring things, and coming up with general principles about the way things are. The world has been declared by God to be ‘very good’ and exploring it is a way to express our gratitude to Him. Scientific discoveries can also bring a sense of awe and wonder that feeds into our worship.

Some people don't want to get involved in certain lines of research because of ethical concerns. On the other hand, there are many issues that make Christians want to get stuck into new research that will help care for people and the rest of creation, such as medical research, ecology or developing appropriate technologies.

As the young people in our churches prepare to return to their studies, online if not in person, let's encourage them that science (along with many other fields) is a great way to serve God.

HYMNS

‘WE HAVE A GOSPEL TO PROCLAIM’

Peter Shore

‘We have a gospel to proclaim’ is one of my favourite hymns.

The words are by Edward Joseph Burns, who was Vicar of St. Peter’s, Chorley, when it was published in 1968/9. It was written for a ‘Call to Mission’ in the Blackburn Diocese. During the ‘Call’ there were four meetings, each one expounding a theme: Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Pentecost. These are recorded in the stanzas. Verses two, three and four tell of Jesus’ birth, death and resurrection, then verse five of His reign at God’s right hand.

The hymn’s evangelistic message quickly led to its inclusion in over 50 hymnals.

The hymn is set to the magnificent tune ‘Fulda’, which is also known as ‘Germany’. The tune was composed by William Gardiner, a keen amateur musician who worked in the hosiery trade, and dates back to around 1815. I wonder whether our good friend Rev. Gerald Gardiner is somehow distantly related; that would be good. Some sources suggest the tune may be found somewhere in Beethoven’s work, though this has yet to be proved.

An organist’s playing has quite a significant influence when relating the story of a hymn. Imagine on Easter Day singing ‘*Jesus lives no longer now*’ from the old Ancient and Modern Hymn Book (Hymn 140). You must follow the punctuation (with an exclamation mark after ‘lives’) and link the words straight to the next line ‘*can thy terrors, death, appal us.*’

When playing the hymn ‘O Lord my God (How Great Thou Art!)’ verse three, ‘*sent Him to die - I scarce can take it in*’, I leave a gap to let the congregation ask that question.

A great deal of thought goes into the choosing of hymns; we always try to pick hymns that suit the readings, especially the Gospel, so on Sundays try to think of the connection.

WORDSEARCH: THE PARABLE OF THE WEEDS

Ever wonder why there is both good and evil allowed in this world? Jesus told a parable that touched on this subject – it is called the Parable of the Weeds. It runs like this: Consider the world as if it were a field where a Farmer has sown good seed. But then an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat. So, when the wheat came up, so did the weeds. What to do? Instead of destroying the weeds, and thereby risking the wheat, the Farmer tells his reapers to wait and let both wheat and weeds grow together until the harvest. At the harvest he will instruct the reapers to gather up the wheat, but to discard the weeds. So do not despair when evil seems to thrive in this world – there is a reckoning still to come, and justice will be done.

Kingdom	Sleeping	Master	Let	Barn
Heaven	Grain	Sow	Grow	Burned
Good	Weeds	Gather	Together	
Seed	Enemy	Reap	Harvest	
Field	Servants	Root	Bundles	



ST. JAMES THE LEAST OF ALL

Uncle Eustace is incumbent in the small parish of St James-the-Least-of All, somewhere in Very Rural England. Eustace despairs of his nephew, Darren, who has become an evangelical curate in a busy urban parish... and so he writes letters, to try and properly 'educate' Darren in how to run a parish. The Revd Dr Gary Bowness continues his tongue-in-cheek letters from 'Uncle Eustace'...

On what clergy should wear on their feet

The Rectory
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

Thank you for sending me the photograph of you having your face painted at your parish's 'Fun Day' – although I can't help feeling that to label an event 'fun' is the most effective way of draining it of all amusement whatsoever.

Why on earth can't parishes continue with the traditional title of 'Crowning of the Rose Queen and Fete', equally traditionally grimly enjoyed to the accompaniment of thunder and torrential rain.

However, the one thing that caused me the greatest concern in your photo was the fact that you were wearing sandals. Sandals are *only* to be worn by Franciscan monks (without socks) and holidaymakers on Blackpool promenade (regrettably, generally with socks).

I know that you will argue that Jesus wore sandals. This was mainly because reliable pairs of brogues had yet to be invented, but also because He lived in a hot, dry country. The only appropriate colour for footwear for a parish priest is black, and the only appropriate material is leather – although I will concede that can create difficulties. Wet leather shoes and polished marble sanctuary floors are a potentially lethal combination.

I well remember as a curate when old Canon Griffith entered the Sanctuary, having just got drenched coming from the Rectory. His feet moved across the marble floor some miles per hour faster than the rest of his body.

Do not take the alternative of wearing crepe soles. I suspect your present church will be fully carpeted – it seems to go with your sort of theology – and there will be no problem. But crepe soles and any sort of polished stone floor are a truly disastrous mixture. The slightest movement will make it sound as if you are being followed by a swarm of demented frogs.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

**In search of a new Rector
(to the tune of 'High Hopes')**

When you have found,
there's no priests on the ground,
there's a lot to be learned,
so gather round.
Just what makes the PCC know
the first ad may produce a no-show?
Everyone knows one ad can't
bring new clergy to Stoke.
But we have high hopes,
we have high hopes,
we have prayers for a Rev drawing nigh hopes.
So, any time we're feeling low,
instead of letting go,
we'll keep going until...
...oops, there goes another vacancy,
Oops, there goes another vacancy,
Oops, there goes another vacancy,
Filled
Thank God!

Ed

BACK PEW Reason to be cheerful

I've seen it all now! Early in August, a cathedral advertising a Christmas event. My cathedral at that. Forget those looming TV commercial ads and awful supermarket displays where Christmas vies with '*Back To School*' sales. It seems that to celebrate our Lord and Saviour we must book in advance. There will be competition. You don't want to miss out. What next? Ticket touts in the Close at Lichfield?

Am I becoming grumpy? Did anyone else wonder whether the extremely loud national emergency alert about wildfires was really necessary? It certainly made me jump.

One of our cats, Boz, named after Charles Dickens, came in one tea-time, shaking his head. It turned out his ear was cut. Before we could ascertain this, however, he had shaken blood spots around the house and disappeared outside again, leaving us anxious and confused. We wandered around the houses and canal side calling his name, to no avail. He returned at 2.30 a.m., calmly allowed his ear to be bathed and fell asleep.

We did not escape the heatwave that covered most of the country. We found our church baking-hot one Sunday morning. Nothing unusual about that, you might say, but a visit from a heating engineer had also left the system on 'timer' rather than the 'off' position.

Sadly, there were no applications for our vacant post of Rector from the first round of advertisements in the *Church Times*. God's chosen person remains out there, struggling, perhaps, with the call, but she or he cannot resist for ever; we will keep praying for a closer walk.

Amongst all this, some great and cheerful news. On 14 August after 8.00 p.m. in Washington DC (1.00 a.m. 15th August in the UK) our first grandchild was born, Emmeline Maria, an 8lbs. 12 ozs. bundle of joy. Later in the morning, in preparation for our Saturday meditation with the School of Contemplative Life, leader Chris Whittington spoke of Julian of Norwich and her thoughts about both the paternal and maternal nature of God. '*All is One Love*', as Julian put it. How true.

For the 100th Bishop of Lichfield

Eternal Father,
you have provided faithful pastors in every age
to watch over your people and lead them in your ways:
as you chose your servant Chad
to be the first bishop of your church in Lichfield,
so raise up for us, who follow Christ in his footsteps today,
a shepherd to lead your people
in the joy and steadfastness of the Holy Spirit,
that all may know the abundant life
which you give us in Jesus Christ your Son.
Amen.

For the mission and ministry of the church in this City

Lord of the Church, thank you for your presence in the centre of Stoke-on-Trent. We acknowledge the fragility of our current situation. We open ourselves to the new thing you would do in us and through us. We seek your guidance and way forward. Deliver us from evil. Bless this region, our structures and networks, that alongside all people of good will we may play our part in your kingdom in the name of Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

For a new Rector for the Hanley Team Ministry

God our Father,
you are all knowing.
God of all creation and life,
you know the needs of your Church in the Hanley Team.
In this time of seeking and praying for a new Rector, we pray for you to place this calling within the heart of the servant you have chosen.
You alone know the plans you have for your Church in Hanley.
We ask the Holy Spirit to guide us and give us discernment to know the person you have chosen.
We ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ.
Amen.



CONTACTS

Rector – Vacant

Assistant Minister

for St. Mark's Church

and Strategic Missioner

for St. Matthew's Church and St. Luke's Church

07488233118

revmikebridgewater@gmail.com

Rev. Mike Bridgewater



Assistant Minister Rev. Gill Shilkoff 07525668262

gillshilkoff@btinternet.com

SERVICES

Holy Communion Sundays:	09.30 Christ Church, Cobridge
	11.00 Holy Trinity Church, Northwood
	10.00 St. Mark's Church, Shelton
	(First & Fifth Sundays, other Sundays
	Morning Worship)
Evensong	16.00 Holy Trinity (monthly)
Bubble Church	15.00 St. Luke's Church
	(Last Sunday of the month)
Tuesdays	10.00 St. Matthew's, Birches Head
Wednesdays	11.00 St. Luke's, Wellington
Thursdays:	
Service of The Word	10.00 Christ Church, Cobridge

Whilst the Rectorship is 'in vacancy', services will be co-ordinated by members of the laity in conjunction with available clergy.

For general enquiries, banns, baptisms and weddings, the contact is

Winnie Wilshaw 07731829785

winnie_184@msn.com

For funerals, contact a funeral director in the first instance, then

Kathleen Durber

01782 219147 or 07752 378847

Dekadurber@yahoo.com

Safeguarding Officer – Mary Chanot – Tel. 01782 271262

'In Touch' editor Graham Foxley 07707011628

mgffoxley@live.co.uk

The deadline for October's issue is Holy Cross Day