

Lace cross by the late Fay Green

ST. MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS — Parish Church of Amersham on the Hill

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER '26

Who's Who at St. Michael & All Angels

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Amersham HP6 5DR

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...I haven't the heart to tell her the bishop went home 20minutes ago!

St. Michael's Vision Statement

As a Christian community, we seek to engage with the world around us and to be a place of welcome and acceptance for all on a journey to God – believers, doubters and those who are seeking.

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Vicar, PCC or the official policy of St. Michael's Church.

The Newsletter is published monthly (with the exception of January and August). Please email material for inclusion in the next issue to communications@stmichaelsamersham.org.uk, for the attention of Rebecca.

From the Editor... in many ways November is a time for reflection. On 1 November we remember the saints who have paved pathways towards God during All Saints, then we remember our loved ones during All Souls. These celebrations are quickly followed by Remembrance Sunday, and soon after that, at St Michael's we will be remembering the messages the angels have brought us, as we read and perhaps even walk, while we reflect on those messages and what they mean to us, our community and even further afield.

For a while an idea has been swirling around the church office to discuss death and funerals. Approaching All Souls seemed to be a good time to start exploring this theme. Pleae avoid pages 4 and 5 if you think this subject may upset you.

We hope your enjoy this reflective, but topical, edition of the newsletter. Happy Reading!

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LETS TALK ABOUT THE ANGELS

By Neil Lynch

Given this patronage it is strange how seldom our thoughts and discussions turn to "All Angels", their nature, presence and importance in our search for God in daily life.

I am happy to hear each week at our Eucharistic services that; "……. With angels and archangels and all the powers of heaven we sing your praise …." Or declare in the creed that I believe in; "God … maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen ….."

Could it be I am a little afraid or embarrassed to believe in unseen angels in a world which places far more value on what can be seen "for real", measured and explained?

Biblical references to generic angels are far



more common, though less well known and quoted than mentions of named angels like Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, who tend to dominate both religious and secular imagery. They bring messages, power and help from God ("Angelos" being the Greek word for messenger) but in a way which is done with deference and acknowledgement of their role as servants.

So … do you believe in angels and have you felt their presence?

Hear and discuss more by joining our advent course which this year is entitled 'Walking With Angels" and written by Eleanor Sanderson the Bishop of Hull. It is based on her experiences while walking and praying along the streets of Hull for the community and observing God at work there in everyday life.

With the help of angels of course.

Thank you…

Age UK Buckinghamshire greatly appreciated being invited to share our work for local older people with you in early October - thank you to everyone that welcomed us to your Sunday services.

Myself, as Age UK Bucks CEO, and Sue, our amazing volunteer, also found the tea and chat at the end of each service a real highlight, especially as it meant we could hear some of the challenges and issues faced by local friends and families. The challenges of ageing can be significant, but many of you are also testament to just how much older people in our community also contribute and give back.

We are especially touched that you have seen fit to support us through your harvest festival period donations. We are a totally independent local charity, sharing the Age UK branding with the national organisation, and all our funds are raised in Bucks and spent on services that directly support local older people.

You can also support us by becoming a volunteer - which I know many of you already do for many worthy organisations. We are currently looking for volunteers in our Age Better Bucks service to help older people access and use support that has been arranged for them (which at times can feel overwhelming for them), and to feel less lonely. We are also trying to grow our fabulous group of Welfare Benefits volunteers, who are trained to help older people claim benefits like Pension Credit or Attendance Allowance - which can be worth over £100 a week to recipients.

And finally, please do encourage people you know to use our services and support. We can help anyone challenged by ageing, to improve access to services and support, ease loneliness and isolation, apply for benefits like attendance allowance, support with help at home including gardening, housekeeping and toe nail cutting - for a fixed hourly rate through trades vetted by Age UK Bucks. And we also have specialist services supporting people after a hospital stay, or for those with memory concern or diagnosed with dementia, and their carers.

Our main line number is open 9.30-12.30 Monday to Friday on 01296 431911, and Age Better Bucks' telephone line runs 9.00-5.00 weekdays on 01296 846099.



We have also just launched a new 'Engage' guide to living well, and we'll be sure to drop off copies to you shortly to share in your community.

Mark with the new Age UK Bucks guide to living and ageing well:

Thank you again for welcoming us to your Church, for reaching out to recognise our work and cause, and for supporting local older people so generously.

Mark and Sue

A conversation worth having

By Rebecca Olsen

Ecclesiasties 12.7
'*and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the breath returns to God who gave it*'

Death is a subject that we don't often talk openly about, but perhaps we should. It can happen to any of us, or anyone we know, at any time. It affects us all.

The Department of Education (DfE) seem to think it is worth talking about. With 127 children loosing a parent every day in the UK, in July 2025 they made grief education a mandatory requirement for all state primary and secondary schools, accademies, and free schools in England, with full implementation in September 2026.

Issues such as the feelings a death can bring up and how everyone deals with grief differently are now addressed in schools, alongside how relationships may change after a death, coping strategies, and the language surounding death that can be used instead of confusing euphemisims.

If schools are speaking about it, perhaps it is time we do too.

A friend told me recently that her children asked her what she wanted to happen after she died. She said, a little service at the crematorium would be enough. Her children, knowing she was a Christian, thought that perhaps a service in a church would be better.

The children are not Christian themselves, but their acknowledgement of their mother's beliefs gave my friend hope that in this way they too might connect with God, through her funeral.

Ultimately, funerals are about people, who are left behind, and about love and remembrance. They provide an important space in which grief can be shared, memories celebrated and the reality of loss acknowledged, by those still living. And, when done well, they honour the life of the person who has passed away.

Whilst a funeral is ultimately for those still living it is often planned by family who may be operating in a state of shock and lack of understanding about the the choices they need to make, or finding they have no idea how to honour (or even know) what might have been the wishes of the person who died, as death had never been discussed. A good minister and funeral director will be able to guide families through the choices that need to be made, and the chance to reflect before the funeral may be cathartic, but neither a minister nor a funeral director can know more than the person who has died about what their personal wishes would have been, unless they have had to opportunity to discuss this in advance.

In my friend's case, the conversation with her children inspired her to consider what she would like her funeral to look like and take action.

She contacted the vicar and received a visit.

The vicar arrived at an agreed time armed with a form titled, 'Funeral Visit', and together they completed the form.

After the basic details such as name, known as, date of birth, address, next of kin and a telephone number for the next of kin, the form moves on to the more interesting details of a persons life:

Where and when born?
What school/s? Childhood memories?
Where lived and what year moved here?
Work/war/national service?
Married? Once? Or more? Where met?
Widow/er? If so how long?
What like as husband or wife?
Children? Names? Children spouses?
Other family relationships? i.e. Grandchildren etc.
What like as a brother/sister/grandad/gran etc?
Deceased relationships to mention?
Character/personal qualities?
Interests?
Info about death i.e.ready to go?
Looked after by?
Sum up in one word or phrase?
Praying person?
Place/type - Crem/cemetery? Burial/cremation?
Music in/out
Hymn/s
Readings - Favourite scripture or psalm.
People to intercede for during service.
Who will do tribute? Do family want to?
Extras - A poem or reading?

Some of the questions require a third party to respond and families may or may not be ready to do that, but at least by completing the basic responses we can lighten the journey for our loved ones during what will be a difficult time for them, and in the process enjoy reflecting on the life we have lived.

From our responses an outline service can be drawn up quite easily.

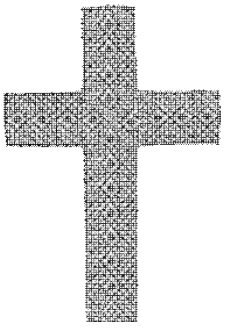
Maybe our prepared responses will inspire deeper reflection from our loved ones after we've gone, or help them to remember or learn something of us they were unaware of. Or maybe it will just lighten the pressure and allow them to focus on other aspects of funeral preparation - contacting people, finances, logistics.

And if finances are tight? The cheapest option upfront is not always ultimately the best option either emotionally or financially.

Remember that what makes a funeral special is not the amount of money spent, but the opportunity it provides for family and friends to come together, remember a life and share their grief.

There are many ways to create a personal and dignified farewell without unnecessary expense. Choosing a simple coffin (which incidentially will also decompose more quickly and allow a body to return to earth more easily), holding a service in a meaningful location, creating your own order of service or asking family members to contribute readings, music and memories can all make a funeral deeply personal, and lower the cost.

If you feel inspired to reflect on your own life and death and would like to have your own responses to the questions in this article documented and kept on file for the future, please do let the office or Revd. Debbie know. Once completed, your documents will be held in a private and confidential manner until such a time that they are needed.



What music should we choose for the funeral?

By Rachel Wilcox

If the person has left instructions about what they wanted then that is what should happen, if at all possible. But if you don't have any indications, and have to start from scratch, here are some things to consider.

If the service is in a chapel at a crematorium, if there is no organ there will be access to a large bank of recorded music – hymns and songs to sing, as well as music for the beginning and end of the service.

On the other hand, if you are in a church, you would be able to have music played live, if there is an organist available, or even sung if a choir can be gathered. Usually this is a very good option, especially for hymns. However you do need to take into account that not every organist can play every piece, and some things just cannot be played effectively on the organ. You will also need to budget for musicians' fees.

At St. Michael's, and many other churches, there is also the option of playing music over our sound system so it is possible to use recorded music if you wish, and we also have recorded hymns if nobody is available to play the organ. If you do have your hymns accompanied in this way it's worth seeing if you can find a version with a choir singing, to help boost both the sound and the confidence of your congregation.

So how much music do you need to choose? The celebrant for the funeral will have an outline order of service which will guide you: music when the coffin is brought in, suitable places for hymns and something else at the end when the coffin is carried out of the church. This is a good place to include something that is personal, and it need not be somber – one ex-RAF officer's funeral ended with 'Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines' which was a glorious evocation of the person. You may also want something playing quietly before the service as people gather – silence can be quite daunting.

The outline you are given will indicate how many hymns or songs you should choose, and the minister taking the service will be able to help you decide on choices. Do bear in mind that those attending may not be able to sing out as lustily as usual, and also consider who will be there and the music they are likely to be familiar with. It's not the time to be struggling with a completely unfamiliar hymn. If you have made a special choice it is worth double-checking that the funeral director has printed the right words (different hymnbooks do vary) and the organist knows your favourite tunes.

One key point, though, which can't be said too often: the service is for those left behind.

If instructions were left, those choices will be a connection with the person you have lost and a very personal memory: if not, whatever you choose, make sure it speaks to you and supports you. You and your family and friends are the ones who will remember this day when you remember your loved one, and it is your chance to create a last good memory to carry into the future.

Remembering him

By a friend of the editor, Angela Durrant

Two and a half years after losing him, something happened this morning that I wasn't expecting.

I saw a beautiful post from a friend remembering him. and it opened a door in me that I hadn't even realised was still closed.

I sat, looking at the empty chair opposite me, and cried in a way I haven't cried for a very long time.

When he died, I was in shock. I was frightened, and there was so much to deal with. Life had to carry on.

And it has. So much has happened in the last two and a half years. A successful air BnB from the ashes of our family home, our daughter is at university, businesses have developed, life has changed enormously, and done my best to keep moving forward.

But this morning I realised how much I've missed something I hadn't fully understood when I had it.

He was a quiet and very stable presence in our lives. The person who was always there to come home to, even when he was working and I didn't see him for days on end.

He believed in me, encouraged me and gave me a sense of safety that allowed me to fly.

We had our difficulties, of course. We were married, we were human, and life wasn't easy, most times it was really messy.

But this morning I found myself talking to him, thanking him for who he was and for everything we created together. And my heart just broke open again. Not only with grief, but with an overwhelming sense of love.

I think I've spent so much time trying to navigate life without him that I hadn't allowed myself to feel just how much of him was still part of me and how much love and stability I wanted to draw on.

And perhaps that's something I'm learning about grief.

It doesn't follow a timetable. It changes. Sometimes, years later, something quite unexpected opens a door, and you find yourself feeling things you thought you'd already felt.

Today I don't feel further away from him because I've allowed myself to grieve him again. I actually feel closer.

As though, in allowing the heartbreak, I've also allowed more of the love in.

And perhaps that's what I'm beginning to understand.

I don't have to stop loving him, missing him or remembering the life we shared in order to keep living mine.

I can let my heart break open with love, as many times as it needs to.

It is helping me understand how to love again in new ways.

NOW, HERE, THIS

By Barry Olsen

In the little village in which I grew up, Saturday night was when we 'went to the pictures,' as we said in New Zealand. There would be a film in the village hall. During WWII and after it the film would sometimes be about the American navy. I remember how the officer on the ship would give an order over the Tannoy saying, 'Now hear this. Now hear this.'

The phrase also struck the monk and writer, Thomas Merton. He made a slight change to it and found that it became a memorable guide to Christian living. He changed it to, 'Now, Here, This.'

So, we are to live now. Some people have a propensity to live in the past. As Anthony de Mello said, 'I cannot be alive if I cling on to yesterday for yesterday is a memory, a creation of the mind.' So we are to let go of 'grievances, resentments and regrets.' Nor must we live in the future with our ambitions 'to acquire, to achieve, to become somebody.' Life is now. Jesus says similar things in the Sermon on the Mount when speaking about anxiety.

We are to live here. School roll calls come to mind. 'Olsen? Present, sir.' I wonder how present I was in many of those lessons! For us, being here, for example in a conversation, will involve us in giving the other person all our attention, listening carefully to what they are saying, treating them with respect. Going for a walk will mean being aware of our surroundings and enjoying them. The news shows people visiting the Bayeux Tapestry and so many of them aren't looking at it and appreciating it for what it is, rather they are intent on photographing it with their mobiles!

What does this require of us? I think it means doing whatever we have to do, as Dolly Parton said, on purpose. It means concentrating on the matter in hand, seeing it as worth doing well, and not being distracted by other things. I'm reminded of George Herbert's hymn:

Teach me, my God and King,
in all things thee to see;
and what I do in anything
to do it as for thee.

We don't have to be US Navy sailors to respond to 'Now. Here. This.'

Eco Corner

The Royal British Legion now have 100% plastic-free recyclable paper poppies available, made from recycled coffee cup offcuts.

Volunteers & Cakes Needed

SETTING UP COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL
MONDAY, 23 NOVEMBER – 10a.m.-midday (approx.)

All going well with 35 trees now booked, so pretty much full house. We could really do with more help setting up the trees all around the Church, ready for the groups to come in and decorate. Please email kiki@akipl.com

CAKES AND TRAYBAKES FOR 'CAROLS, COFFEE AND CAKE' ON SATURDAY 5 DECEMBER REQUESTED PLEASE

All contributions, homemade absolutely wonderful or bought, equally appreciated. Please deliver to the church office by midday on Friday, 4 December or to the Church kitchen by 10a.m. on Saturday, 5 December.

HELP AT CAROLS, COFFEE AND CAKE – Saturday, 5 December, from 1p.m. to 3.30p.m. also requested

An entertaining time is promised whilst raising funds for Wycombe Homeless Connection! Please email kiki@akipl.com





WORSHIP

Eucharists:
Sundays 8.30am and 10am
(Gathered Round on the second Sunday of each month is especially designed for families)
Tuesday 10.30am

Morning Prayer:
Tuesdays 9am in the Lady Chapel.

Special Services: All Souls - 4pm, 1 November
Remembrance Sunday - 10am, 8 November
Remembrance Day (COTHA) - 10.55, 11 November - In St Michael's Square

Messy Church: 21 November '26
(The third Saturday each month 11.30am—1pm, EXCEPT AUGUST)

St. Michael's is usually open **to ALL** for private prayer from 10am—4pm— Mon– Fri.
https://www.youtube.com/@stmichaelandallangels/streams, will access live-streamed services.

WARDENS

1 Nov — Roland Gillott
8 Nov — Roger Leslie
15 Nov — Claire O.Beirne
22 Nov — Andy Connor
29 Nov - Alan Bacon

Please see:
stmichaelsamersham.org.uk
for more details

ACTIVITIES AT ST. MICHAEL'S & BEYOND

CARDS FOR GOOD CAUSES - Every day from 31 October - 20 December 10a.m.-4p.m.
(Saturday 21 November and 18 December from 2pm and Sundays after the 10am service)

POP IN & PAINT— Friday, 6 November —10.30am-12.15pm — St. Michael's, Main Church
Join Jenny Thompson and Liz Grammenos from Simpatico. No experience needed. Materials provided.

CANCER SUPPORT GROUP— Thursday, 5 November — 10am-12 noon—St. Michael's, Wheeler Room
Tea, Coffee and Support.

A CRAFTY CUPPA— Friday, 12 & 27 November — 10.30am-12 noon — St. Michael's, Wheeler Room
A drop-in session for everyone who wants a cuppa and some company. Feel free to bring a craft with you.

LUNCHBREAK – Amersham Free Church Every Tuesday – 12noon-2pm
Tea, coffee and soup available **1.10pm-1.30pm** Music, a talk, or a short service.

REPAIR CAFÉ – Saturday, 7 November – 10.a.m.-1p.m.—St. Michael's Church
Come to Sustainable Amersham's pop-up Repair Café. Volunteer repairers will help you fix stuff for free.

RED KITE CRAFT MARKET – Saturday, 7 November – 9a.m.-1p.m. – St. Michael's Church Hall.
Handmade crafts, including, cards, woodwork, knitting, jewellery and much more.

COUNTRY MARKET - – Saturday, 14 November – 10a.m.-1p.m. – St. Michael's Church Hall.
Festive handmade crafts. unique handmade gifts, plants and seasonal greenery, and refreshments.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES IN THE HALL

Mondays	**Stay Steady, Stay Strong** 3pm-4pm (Tel: 07951 294178)
	Amersham Dance Studio Children from 3+. 4pm-10pm (email: emma@amershamdancestudio.co.uk)
Tuesdays	**Tuffney Performing Arts Academy** 5pm-6pm (Email: office@tuffney.com)
	Yoga with Shiv 5pm-7pm (Glover Rm) (Tel: 07815132157)
	Amersham A Capella 7pm-11pm (https://www.amershamacappella.com/)
Wednesdays	**Karate Club** 6.30pm-8pm (Tel: 07951 024 397)
	Badminton Club 8.15pm-10.15 pm (Tel: 01923 264791)
Thursdays	**Badminton** 1.30pm-3.30pm
	Amersham Dance Studio Children from 3+. 4pm-7pm (email: emma@amershamdancestudio.co.uk)
Fridays	**Stay Steady, Stay Strong** 1.30pm-3.45pm (Tel: 07951 294178)
Saturdays	**Dabble Art** 9a.m-10.30am (Email: dabble@dabbleart.co.uk)

Please see stmichaelsamersham.org.uk if you would like to book the hall.
For information about **Little Learners Nursery** please see https://littlelearnersamersham.co.uk

Saturday 21 Novekmber, Messy Church

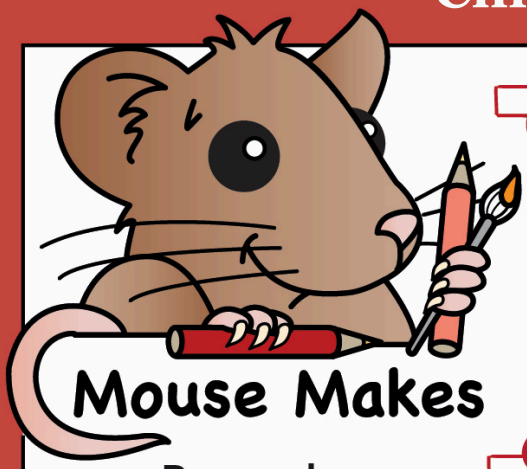
will be on in St. Michael's from 11.30am to 1pm. Fun activities will be followed by a short interactive session about the story behind the activities, and lunch, which is provided for all. No need to book, just turn up. All welcome. This activity is free but donations are welcome to cover costs.

Weddings, Baptisms and Deaths:

RIP Jamie Haley

DIARY NOVEMBER '26

Children & Families



Remembrance Sunday is the day we remember the sacrifice of those who gave their lives so that we could live in peace, it mirrors what Christ did for us when he gave his life so that we could live in peace with God.

Remember
the words Jesus said:
"It is more blessed to give than to receive."
Colossians 3:25

Jesus said:
"No one can have greater love than to give his life for his friends."
John 15:13

O P R O T E C T
S R E S P E C T U N
B R A V E R Y H E F
E S E C O L O Y A L H T C
I R E M E M B R A N C E R O
M E L E B K O R I M
K G F M Y F U O B M
V A L O U R I U R I U E
R R E R K N F O V L A S T N
I D S I H O N O U R G M E D
G S A C R I F I C E L V
L U S E R V I C E
D A R M I S T I C E
E D E F E N D N



REMEMBRANCE • PROTECT • DEFEND • SACRIFICE • SELFLESS • SERVICE
BRAVERY • VALOUR • HONOUR • COURAGE • HEROISM • LOYAL • REGARD
RESPECT • THANKFUL • MEMORIAL • TRIBUTE • COMMEND • ARMISTICE • PEACE



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