

The Village Herald

Hayes Meadow
Primary School
Angel Competition
entry



**Bringing our church closer to the community
and the community closer to the church**



Rev'd Jules writes

Hello there... It doesn't seem that long ago since I wrote to you last month but so much has happened. On Saturday 20th June at St Michael's Church, Lichfield I was priested by our Diocesan Bishop - The Right Reverend Dr Michael Igrave. I was also Bishop Michael's last priest to be priested by him as he retires in September.

This was an immense privilege not just to be priested by Bishop Michael, but also to be priested as a woman in the Church of England. Women have only been priested for just over thirty years. It is wonderful to have my calling recognised and to continue to do Gods work here in Brereton, Rugeley and Armitage with Handsacre Benefice. I wasn't sure that I would feel any different but I really do.

As a Deacon in the Church of England, which is what I've spent the last year doing allows me to lead worship, attend and lead funerals as well as being out in the community serving Gods people. As a priest I am able to preside at Holy Communion or Eucharist as it is sometimes called as well as conducting weddings and baptisms.

When I presided at my first Holy Communion a few weeks ago it felt very special and different to be able to give Gods people his sacrament of bread (Jesus' body) and the wine (Jesus' blood). At times during the service I felt very emotional. I couldn't quite believe, as I was standing

in front of God's people, that God had called me into this kind of ministry, not just as a woman, but who has spent all their life up to now working with children, staff and families in schools. Some might say it's not dissimilar and others may say it is hugely different.

Nevertheless it is a new season of life. It signified the end of all my years of study and discernment to get to that point but also the beginning of the many years that God will continue to mold and shape me and my ministry to serve all of Gods people in love, humbleness and kindness.

It is such an amazing feeling to walk in the footsteps that I believe God is calling me to walk in. If you feel stirred or called to explore a faith or even a calling into ordained ministry no matter who you are... come, seek, explore and ask those questions.

God calls people of all kinds to do his work in his kingdom. My prayer is that you allow God to open your heart and mind to what might be in the future and rest in the assurance of his never ending love for you whatever you do and whoever you are. You are all fearfully and wonderfully made in God's image. Amen.

Reverend Jules Smith

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Parish Church website: www.achurchnearyou.com/armitage-st-john-the-baptist

Village website: www.armitagewithhandsacre.co.uk

St John the Baptist church building is open daily from 9am until 6pm.

If you require access to the church room please let Vince Smith know on 07957 613890.

Church Diary

AUGUST 2026

Sunday 2nd August	Ninth Sunday after Trinity 10.30am Holy Communion
Sunday 9th August	Tenth Sunday after Trinity 10.30am Morning Worship
Wednesday 12th August	5pm Prayer and Praise
Sunday 16th August	Eleventh Sunday after Trinity 10.30am Holy Communion
Sunday 23rd August	Twelfth Sunday after Trinity 10.30am Morning Worship
Sunday 30th August	Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity 10.30am Holy Communion

SEPTEMBER 2026

Sunday 6th September	Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity 10.30am Morning Worship
Wednesday 9th September	5pm Prayer and Praise
Sunday 13th September	Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity 10.30am Holy Communion
Sunday 20th September	Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity 10.30am Morning Worship
Sunday 27th September	Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity 10.30am Holy Communion

ATTENTION: We want to hear from you

Are you having a special Birthday, Anniversary, Graduation or any event or milestone you would like to share with us?

Yes, well read on.

Remember this is as much your magazine as ours so help us turn it into a truly magnificent community magazine so let's have your news, gossip, photos in fact anything that you want to share with your friends and community.

Everyone likes a gossip, - *Gosh he or she's doesn't look a day over 80 or I didn't realise that they achieved a Masters in maths.*

So send your news/photos to
dannybriggs905@gmail.com

Recent Baptisms, Weddings & Funerals at St John the Baptist

5th July	Baptism of Lilah Amy Bull of Chestnut Close
14th July	Interment of Ashes of June Mary Gilbert of St Thomas Priory
31st July	Funeral of Caroline Shannon of Hill Top View

Village Day



An unexpected but welcome event the Herald Team received the Sam Woodberry Award for best stand on Village Day. Councillor Richard Cox seen presenting the award to Barry Little the Coordinator for the The Village Herald. Barry said it was a great surprise but very welcome and thanked his team for all their hard work on the day and they look forward to hearing and meeting their readers next Village Day (Saturday June 19th 2027).



The winner of the group entry's Ellie who you may well know as scout leader with Armitage receiving her £50 prize from Barry.



The quality of the entry's to our very first build your own Angel competition surpassed all expectations as you can see here with one of our runner ups.



The winner of the over 12 category Holly Bird being presented with her prize of £50.



Beat the buzzer proved very popular with the children as well as some big kids. Thanks to Johns News for donating the gigantic tub of assorted sweets I'm sure the Herald team were seen with a sherbert lolly at different times of the day.



The Herald team on the day what a fine bunch of men and lady or some may say a motley crew. Brian and Janet Syk, Stuart Draper and last but not least Barry.

The winner of our under 12 category was Polly aged 4 years old (unfortunately as she not had her hair done declined the camera).

When Polly was asked what she would do with the £50 prize money she said it would go in her piggy bank.



The Hayes Meadow Primary Schools entry deserves a very special mention for its creativity. Sadly it arrived to late for judging. Congratulations to all involved in the production and it is presently displayed in your church St John The Baptist.

Well done to all those unsung heroes who worked tirelessly in the background to help make Village Day such a success and the Village Herald and St John The Baptist Church look forward to meeting you again soon. The Angel Army will be back bigger and stronger on June 19th 2027

Big thank you to Gordon Hewitson for the photographs.



Handsacre Methodist Church

AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2026

We meet for worship each Sunday morning from 9.30 to 10.30.

The Vine Café

The Vine café at Handsacre Methodist Church is open from 9.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday. We serve a wide range of coffees, teas, and hot chocolate, as well as homemade cakes, other sweet treats, toasties and omelettes. There is no set charge, but donations can be made. Afternoon teas are bookable on request.

You are welcome to stay as long as you like- we have books, magazines, colouring, board games and jigsaws for you to enjoy.

We also have:

Chapel Lambs, a family play group, Mondays from 9.30am till 12pm.

The Hangout, a group for children in years six to eight with food, chat, games and craft, Mondays 3.30pm to 5pm. Term time only.

Book Swap and Chat, Wednesdays from 1pm. An afternoon all about books!

Craft & Chat, Thursdays from 1pm. Enjoy an afternoon in the Vine with good company, refreshments and crafts. Learn to knit or crochet, or improve your existing skills

Games Night, monthly on Monday evenings, a great opportunity to try a wide range of board and card games and make new friends.

Please see our website: handsacremethodist.org.uk for more details and updates. The Vine café has a Facebook page at The Vine Cafe & Community Space. Do like and follow for all the latest information.



Who we are and what we do

As well as caring for and rehoming animals, we run a neuter and chip scheme, we scan and reunite pets, we carry out home

checks and we support some smaller or less well known animal rescues and sanctuaries that don't receive national funding.

We help to rescue and rehabilitate animals in need, foster and rehome small animals. We always carry out home checks and adoption fees apply. Please see our Facebook page and website for animals in need of a loving forever home.

We have a neuter and chip scheme for people who need help towards the cost. If you live locally and have a pet, male and female, that needs neutering

please email us at animalrescuevolunteers1@gmail.com to enquire.

We scan and try to reunite lost pets with their owners - did you know you can take a cat or dog to the vet to check if it has a chip. **There is no charge for this.**

We educate and raise awareness about animal welfare in our local community with school visits and any other organisations who would like us to visit.

We collect and distribute donations to other local rescues, and a list of all our local donation points can be found either on our Facebook page or just by emailing us at animalrescuevolunteers1@gmail.com

Our bank details are also shown on our Facebook page too for anyone who wishes to donate to us.

Registered Charity No 1213558



MEETING POINT is a community group of activities open to all residents of Armitage with Handsacre. Disabled people can be transported door to door. All welcome.

01543 491704 or gifford_foote@hotmail.co.uk

TUESDAYS 10am - 11.45am - Drop in to Handsacre Methodist room - the Vine Café. Meet friends over a cuppa and join in with activities and an interesting half hour.

4th August: Outing to Liverpool –
Vine is open for anyone who can get there

11th August: Craft with Diane

18th August: Half hour with Stephen Carleston
at the key board and Gerri on violin

25th August: Music on You Tube

**ART GROUP
RETURNS
SEPTEMBER 4th**

THURSDAYS 1pm - 3pm:

Join the **Knit and Natter** group at Armitage Parish church room. They raise funds for a hospice etc.

GraceCares

Pre-Loved Care Equipment

Meeting Point has been assisted by Grace Cares with talks about their charity and a practical session with Maggs on stone painting.

The hub is Unit 2 the Portal,
Elmhurst Business Park,
Elmhurst, Lichfield, WS13 8EX .

The charity takes used care equipment like wheel chairs, frames and dozens of other items. You can go to the hub and buy at very reasonable prices.

They are open Monday to Friday
10am - 3pm .

You can call them on 01543 730189

Profits generated from selling care equipment enables the charity to provide hardship grants and support for unpaid care givers and older people.

**If you have special need for transport to medical appointments
phone 01543 547507 for help from Community Transport.**

Assault and Battery in the House of God



On Sunday evening, 20 August 1837, St. John the Baptist church at Armitage looked very different from the church we know today.

There was no south aisle, no vestry, and no surrounding stone wall. The church itself was old and in poor repair. Rain leaked through the roof, mortar was crumbling from the walls, and draughts whistled through the windows. Although the tower had been rebuilt in 1632, much of the rest of the building was badly decayed. Within a few years it would be almost completely rebuilt.

Inside, the church also looked unfamiliar. The congregation did not sit in neat rows facing the front. Instead, much of the nave was filled with enclosed box pews owned or rented by local families. Some were almost like small wooden rooms, with doors, curtains and benches inside. Ownership of pews could become a matter of status and pride, and rights to particular pews were sometimes passed down through generations.

On that August evening, parishioner Mary Short took her usual place in the pew her family had occupied for many years. During the service, however, another villager, George Emery of Handsacre, entered the church and demanded that she leave what he claimed was his pew.

Mary refused.

According to witnesses, Emery became furious. He forced open the pew door, shouted at her, dragged her out, and threw her onto the floor before kicking her towards the church door. Members of the congregation were horrified, and the clergy struggled to restore order so that the service could continue.

The following day Mary reported the assault, and within less than a week the case was heard before magistrates at Stafford.

Several witnesses gave evidence, including the Rev. Wetherall and the Rev. Francis Wilson. They described Emery's violent behaviour and the shock caused by such an incident taking place during divine worship. Mary herself showed the bruises she had received.

Emery's defence was remarkable. His lawyer argued that Emery believed he had a legal right to the pew and was therefore justified in removing Mary by force. The magistrates disagreed. Whatever dispute existed over ownership, they ruled that no one had the right to commit violence in church.

The chairman of the magistrates declared that the assault was especially serious because it had taken place *"in the House of God, when the peaceful inhabitants were assembled for Divine worship."*

Emery was fined the maximum penalty available to the court: £4 4s plus costs.

The dispute itself reflected wider changes taking place within English churches during the 18th and early 19th centuries. After the Reformation, churches increasingly filled with privately owned pews as sermons became longer and congregations expected more seating. Wealthier parishioners often occupied large enclosed pews, while poorer villagers sat on plain benches towards the back of the church.

At Armitage, as elsewhere, pew ownership could become deeply contentious. Families regarded particular seats as their established right, sometimes for generations. In this case, Mary Short insisted that her family had occupied the pew since at least 1770.

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