

St. Faith and St. Laurence Harborne



2026



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
BIRMINGHAM

USEFUL NUMBERS (See also back cover)

Priest- in-Charge: REVD. DAVID PARKER

Mobile: 07532 338961

Email: davidparker124@btinternet.com

PCC Vice-Chair CAROLINE MOSLEY

Email: caromosley1@gmail.com

Mobile: 07887552123

Task Group Chairs

Church Estate Task Group DAVID ARKELL

429 2772

Mission: PAULINE SITFORD Email: pauline.walkersend@gmail.com 427 7005

Socials: DAVID GLANVILL Email: davidglanvill@yahoo.co.uk 682 8360

Communications: CAROLINE MOSLEY Email: caromosley1@gmail.com

Mobile: 07887552123

Eco Church : CORINNE TREACY-Parish Environment Contact Mobile: 07752640151

Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator: SALLY GRIFFITHS Mobile: 07940 758396

E-mail: sallyegriff@gmail.com

Mobile: 07934 933629

Vulnerable Adults Contact: Sue Glanvill

E-mail sue_granvill@yahoo.co.uk

Mobile: 07752640151

Parish Identity Verifier: CORINNE TREACY

Our Safeguarding policies pack is available in the Hall, in the church and on our website.

Safeguarding posters and Promoting a Safer Church with our Parish Policy Statement posters are on display in the Hall and Church together with some leaflets. If you have any concerns about the safety of a child, young person or vulnerable adult, please speak to a member of the Safeguarding Team or to Revd. David Parker. Concerns may have then to be passed to the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser in confidence. In an emergency contact police, Social Care Services, or for a child, the NSPCC helpline 0808 800 5000

ACTIVITIES

Women's Fellowship: CAROLINE MARSHALL

Mobile: 0791816450

Stay and Play: Thursdays 9.30am- 11am

HILARY SHAYLOR

454 0451

Lesson Readers Secretaries:

(10am)

BRENDA STOTT

681 9339

(6.30pm)

DIANA LEADBEATER

427 1930

Planned Giving: CORINNE TREACY (TEMPORARY)

Mobile: 07752640151

Church Flower Group: JOSIE PHILLIPS

421 2574

HELEN HAYWARD

Mobile: 07512096546

Mobile: 07940133941

Transport DAVID GLANVILL Email: davidglanvill@yahoo.co.uk Mobile: 07710 863659

Co-ordinator: (Please contact David if you need, or can offer lifts to church)

Uniformed Organisations

Scout Association Ring 0345 300 1818 and ask for 293rd Birmingham Scout Group

GSL Leader: TOM McARDLE

Beavers: Monday, 6pm EMMA CAWSEY

Cub Scouts: Wednesday, 6pm MATT CAWSEY

Scouts: Tuesday, 7.15pm Leader: KEVIN PAYNE

Guides: Wednesday, 7.30pm Guider: AMANDA JONES 01384 636928

Brownies: Wednesday, 6pm-7.30pm Brown Owl: JANET JONES 429 8167

Rainbow Unit: Wednesday, 4.45pm-5.45pm Leader: JANET JONES 429 8167

SILVER AND LOVE

178 High Street, Harborne, B17 9PP

07823456222

Silver Jewellery, Fairtrade gifts

Cards, Piercing

Jewellery Repairs

Shop local

Est 2004

To place your advertisement here,
please email Corinne Treacy at corinneftreacy@gmail.com



A lifestyle
tailored
to you

Residents' quality of life is at the heart of everything we do, enabling each individual to lead an independent and fulfilling life.

If you're considering a care home, call **0121 392 6706** or visit careuk.com/metchley-manor

Inspected and rated

Good

Care Quality Commission

Trusted to care

Metchley Manor care home
Edgbaston

care UK

**Abigail Kelly
Soprano**

*Available for weddings,
parties, funerals and any other
special events.*

www.abigailkellysoprano.com

info@abigailkellysoprano.com

07890 585 143



*Since 1920, The Taylor Family Has Provided, Personal, Professional
and Dignified Funeral Services Let us help you in your time of need*

A.B. Taylor

Funeral Services Limited
Rolls-Royce and Mercedes
Hearse and Limousines
Pre-Payment Funeral plans
24 Hour Emergency Service

0121 4344340

info@abtaylorfunerals.co.uk

49 Wolverhampton Road South, Birmingham, B32 2AY

Queens Park Store

230 Court Oak Road
Opposite the 'Court Oak Pub'

Selling Furniture, DIY Bathrooms
Come and see!

Open 7 Days a week

Tel: 0121 428 2164

Aspects of life at St Faith and St Laurence

Morning Prayer – is normally said Monday, Tuesday and Thursday at 8.30 am in the Lady Chapel. We use Common Worship Daily Prayer, all are welcome to come and join in.

Task Groups – The church has a number of task groups enabling areas of church life. These are listed on the inside cover of the magazine with the contact details of the chairs. If you would like to be a part of a groups please contact the relevant chair. All are welcome to join.

Stay and Play meets on Thursday between 9.30 and 11am in the Hall to give a chance for people with young children to meet and the children to play. All are welcome. Cost £2 per family.

Planned Giving In order to continue, the church relies on the financial support of the congregation and parishioners. It costs over £1500 per week to operate. We encourage people to give regularly through some form of Planned Giving, and to Gift Aid their giving if they pay income tax, so the parish can reclaim tax on the donations at no extra cost to the donor. Each person must decide how much they can afford to give.

The recommended method of planned giving is by direct debit through the Parish Giving Scheme as this reduces bureaucracy and improves our cash flow but still leave the giver in control of their contributions. Some people prefer to pay by Standing Order or using weekly or monthly envelopes. Details of all these methods are available from Loleta Atkinson or Corinne Treacy.

Choir and Music Our church has an excellent musical tradition. Mark Lawrence, is our Director of Music. Please speak to Mark if you would like to support the music in any way, particularly if you are able and interested to sing with others whilst we find new ways to keep our tradition going.



Home Communion There are several people who are unable to get to church, either permanently or temporarily, and to whom David or Sally take communion in their homes. If you would like to receive communion at home, or know someone who might, please speak to David or Sally.

'easyfundraising'

Next time you shop online, think of St Faith and St Laurence and raise free donations with 3,000+ retailers:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stfaithandstlaurence>

Women's Fellowship meets on the first Tuesdays of the month from March to December. Meetings are held in the Committee Room at 2pm. We have talks on a variety of subjects.

Prayer Ministry Team

Prayer ministry is offered during the 10am Communion on the 1st Sunday of each month. People can receive prayer for themselves or for any situation that is important to them. It takes place in the Lady Chapel during the distribution of communion.

Foodbank

We collect food for the Quinton Foodbank. There is a box in church and food can be placed there at any time. The list of things that are needed is in church and in the hall. Food is distributed from St Boniface Church on Wednesdays. Vouchers are required to receive food.



Call in for Coffee time together over a cuppa on a Wednesday morning from 10.30 - 12.00. if needed we can arrange for someone to collect you and then take you home. If you are passing, do call in, or bring a friend, all are welcome.





MENTAL HEALTH

Worldwide, nearly 1.2 billion people live with a mental health disorder, according to global studies. This means about 1 in 7 people globally are affected. Anxiety and depression are the most common types, impacting hundreds of millions of individuals of all ages.

In 2025, around 1 in 5 adults in the UK were living with a common mental health problem, with prevalence rising sharply among young people and women, and mental ill health costing England an estimated £300 billion annually. In 2025 1 in 5 children aged 8–25 report a probable mental health problem, up from 1 in 9 in 2017

The Bible addresses mental health through themes of anxiety, fear, comfort, resilience, and God is always caring—connecting body, mind, and spirit—and features many prominent figures who experienced deep emotional and psychological struggles, such as depression, anxiety, and despair.

The Bible offers various insights into human struggles, including what can be interpreted today as mental illness. There are many accounts of emotional distress, depression, anxiety, and other psychological challenges.

While the Bible does not explicitly use modern clinical terms, Jesus expressed profound grief and emotional distress, notably in the Garden of Gethsemane when he stated his soul was sorrowful unto death. Jesus directly addresses emotional distress, anxiety, and the need for rest but Jesus throughout his ministry Jesus offers empathy, encourages rest from burnout, and promises peace without condemning human suffering.

Jesus had much compassion. Compassion means a deep, inward feeling of mercy, sympathy, and love that always leads to active help. It comes from Hebrew and Greek root words tied to parental care and physical gut emotion.

We know that, according to the Bible, God is “a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness” (Psalm 86:15). Like all of God’s attributes, His compassion is infinite and eternal. His compassions never fail; they are new every morning (Lamentations 3:22-23).

God is a Healer, encompassing physical, spiritual, and emotional restoration.

The Bible affirms that God is our healer, offering restoration for body, mind, and spirit through His promises and power. God is compassion and God is always for us whenever we are happy but God is always when we are struggling!!!

Sally Griffiths

REPORT OF THE CHURCH ESTATE TASK GROUP



After the damage caused by leakage the Committee Room, the ceiling will now be repaired and redecorated. The annual inspection of the church fire extinguishers has been completed with replacements where necessary. Advice is being sought on the best way to deal with the noisy doors in the narthex. Despite attempts to lubricate the hinges they continue to be troublesome. The wall at the bottom of the church front steps has been repaired.

In the garden the two cherry trees have been trimmed. After many years service the volunteer grass cutting team have finally retired and the task will now be continued on a contractual basis

As mentioned above, our attempts to lubricate the hinge of the noisy door in the narthex continued to be troublesome. A contractor recommended by the Diocese was contacted and has now successfully dealt with it.

David Arkell (Chair)

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

are holding a

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

on Saturday, 5th December at 12 noon

in St Faith and St Laurence Church Hall

SOUP, ROLL and CHRISTMASSY TREATS

with entertainment from professional singer MAGGIE O'HARA

Tickets @ £15 byo drinks (tea/coffee will be available) from Helen Hayward
07940133941

Proceeds to Cerebral Palsy Midlands

Maggie O'Hara came to our summer event and those who attended enjoyed the afternoon very much so we have invited her back for her Christmas Show.

Come along and start your Christmas fun with us. Tickets will be limited.

PARISH PROFILE UPDATE



As many of you know, our parish is recruiting a part-time vicar, who will also be our Area Dean (50% of the role). A PCC sub-group is working on a 'Parish Profile' to let prospective candidates know who we're looking for, what our church life looks like and to give a feel for the parish of St Faith and St Laurence. The sub-group is pleased to report that, following an initial consultation exercise, feedback from the full PCC and much discussion, thought and typing, a final text version is now ready. We now need to shape the text into a visually appealing, welcoming and professional brochure.

This will be done using an online graphic design platform used to create social media graphics, presentations and other visual content (Canva). Alex's daughter Sukey has kindly agreed to undertake this task for us - we are so grateful for her time and IT skills. Photographs supplied by church members, with our thanks, will be used to illustrate the document, including the one shown here. The Parish Profile should be ready for final PCC approval in the Autumn. If you'd like to know more, please speak with any of the sub-group members.

From: Caroline Mosley, Helen Setchell, David Glanvill, Alex Robertson, Bronwen Jones

Parish update

Apart from the work of preparing the Parish Profile, which will play a key part in recruitment of a new vicar and is described in the above article, the last few months have been relatively quiet in parish life.

In June, 60 new chairs were purchased for the Hall, and in July another 6 of the new Committee Room chairs (supplementing the 24 purchased in January). These purchases complete the use of the legacy from Priscilla White, which also funded the recent repairs to the church heating system. A plaque recording this bequest will shortly be erected in the Hall.

The Committee Room roof appears to be watertight following the repairs made in June, so we will now proceed with repairs to the ceiling.

David Parker

Creation groans

Britain is severely parched. The evidence is everywhere, from the bleached stubble where once we had green lawns to the falling water levels in many rivers. The Met Office confirmed last week that England and Wales had experienced the driest July on record: “truly remarkable” conditions meant that some areas had recorded no rain at all. England had 90 per cent less rain than average for the month; drought status now applies to more than 70 per cent of England and all of Wales. Approximately 27 million people are under a hosepipe ban. And, as we know to our cost as we endure a fifth heat wave this week, Britain lacks the infrastructure to withstand extreme temperatures: hospitals struggle to keep wards cool, supermarket freezers fail, and railway tracks buckle in the heat.

This is becoming the new normal; for three of the past five summers have brought about drought conditions. Warmer and wetter winters, combined with hotter and drier summers, are entirely in line with what climate scientists have long warned us to expect. Recent analysis by NASA shows that, while the climate has always been subject to flux, global warming is now happening at a rate not seen in the past 10,000 years. The short-term consequences are likely to become apparent as food prices rise in response to the devastation of this year’s harvest.

“The weather has crucified us,” one farmer recently told *The Times*. Nor can we ignore the longer-term consequences. Perhaps because the stakes are so high, the drought has swiftly become a political football. Take wildfires. Some on the Right have blamed green policies — such as rewilding — for creating the conditions for fires to spread in the UK. Some recently referred to the Net Zero target as “a political fiction bankrupting the country”. Other commentators have suggested that we should simply accept climate change as a permanent upgrade to the Mediterranean lifestyle. Those on the Left point out that the Mediterranean is currently experiencing record-breaking temperatures, terrible wildfires, and emergency evacuations.

Christians have long been at the forefront of campaigning on issues of climate change — and should continue to be so. It is 30 years since the Church of England adopted the Five Marks of Mission, the fifth of which is “to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth”. Earlier this summer, the House of Bishops adopted the teaching document *Hope for All Creation*, which sets out a Christian understanding of the environmental crises facing the world, and argues that care for the earth is not an optional concern but a core part of Christian discipleship. Many readers will be turning their thoughts to the newly designated Feast of Creation in Christ, on 6 September. There has never been a more critical moment to study the document — nor, perhaps, to seek out the ancient prayer for rain in the Book of Common Prayer.

Church Times—August 14th

Church Flower Group News and Appeal for Harvest Funding

This year has been a triumph for the St Faith and St Lawrence Church Flower Group with the increase in membership of our group and our winning entry in the St Peters Church Flower Festival in June. Putting our festival display together was an immensely enjoyable experience for all of us and it was very rewarding to see the team acknowledged for their achievement. The team was very appreciative of the support of our sponsors, who have chosen to remain anonymous, but without whom the project would not have been possible. Thank you. We are also grateful to the members of St. Faith and St. Lawrence congregation who went along to see our display at the festival as well as all the other beautiful entries. The theme of the flower festival was "towers", because the funds raised from the festival will be going towards the cost of repairing St Peters tower which is currently in a very poor condition. It was very rewarding to be able to help a neighbouring church with their pressing problem.

The St Faith and St Lawrence Church Flower Group "tower" was entitled "Christ Is My Strength and My Tower". Taken from the 2nd verse of the hymn "All my hope on God is Founded" by Robert Bridges. Until the day we arrived at St Peters to construct our tower we had no idea that the floral displays would be entered into a competition and that visitors to the event would be given the opportunity to vote for their favourite. After the festival was over, we were even more surprised when we arrived at St Peters to take down our display and bring it home to St. Faith and St. Lawrence, that we had been voted "best festival arrangement". Not only were we the winners, but we were told that we had won by quite a significant margin. Our winning prize was a small hamper which we donated as a raffle prize to be used at one of St. Faith and St. Lawrence events. There was much interest from other participants at the flower festival and from some of our congregation, who were intrigued to know how we had achieved our tower. I can reveal that there were 9 Flower Group members present on the day, and we all worked together to create the tower. Seven arrangements were separately created with a further 2 arrangers working on the decoration/disguise of the base and structure. The seven separate arrangements were each created with the individual skill and creativity of one person. The arrangements were then put together onto the structure so that it looked seamless and as though it were one arrangement. After the festival, despite the hot weather creating difficulties with conserving the flowers, we happily managed to re-erect the tower in our church for the enjoyment of our own congregation. The event was a very special achievement for us, particularly when you consider that many of those who took part have only taken up flower arranging over the last 10 months since joining the Church Flower Group. Well done ladies.

We are always pleased to welcome new members to the Church Flower Group. Anyone who is interested in flower arranging should speak to Josie Phillips at Wednesday services and coffee morning (0121 421 2574 & 07512096546) or Helen Hayward at the Sunday 10am service (07940133941). We will be happy to talk you through the tasks and commitments undertaken by our team members. Please don't feel that you need to have had previous experience of flower arranging; we will be happy to teach you at your own pace. If you wish, you may come along to one of our larger sessions to meet the other members of our friendly group and to see what we do.

Harvest Festival is fast approaching, and we would like to ask if you would please give financial support to the cost of St. Faith and St. Lawrence Harvest Festival floral displays as you have kindly done in precious years. The Flower Fund envelopes and the box for your donations are available at the back of the church. Please put your name on the envelope; it is always lovely to know who is supporting us, or you may remain anonymous if you prefer. We are very grateful to everyone who supports us in this way, and we will use your contributions to decorate our lovely church for everyone to enjoy at Harvest Festival. Thank you for your support; it is greatly appreciated.

St. Faith and St. Lawrence Church Flower Group

COVER STORY

This is the symbol for the Season of Creation 2026. A church surrounded by water. The call is for transformation – that Christians would be immersed in the living water flowing from the throne of God- stepping in deeper and deeper, inspired by the Spirit of God, working together for the renewal of Creation.

It began on September 1, recognized as the World Day of Prayer for Creation, and concludes on October 4, the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi.

The 2026 theme, “Living Water,” is inspired by Ezekiel 47:1-12, highlighting water flowing from God’s sanctuary to restore ecosystems and communities, emphasizing both spiritual reflection and ecological responsibility.

Pace e bene. That is how St Francis of Assisi would always greet the people he met: “Peace to you, and all that is good”. Pope Leo XIV visited Assisi recently to meet young people gathered for the jubilee of 800 years since St Francis’ death, to explore Franciscan teachings on themes such as peace and ecology. “St Francis teaches that radicalism of the Gospel is the very opposite of fundamentalism,”

Pope Leo told the crowds. “It does not make us blind or violent; instead, it makes us aware, attentive and always eager to follow Jesus, and therefore humble and welcoming towards everyone.”

This is no wild goose chase



In Celtic Christianity, the symbol for the Holy Spirit is the wild goose. By flying in a V-formation, as each bird flaps its wings the whole flock adds 70% more flying range than if each bird flew alone.

People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they want to go more quickly and easily because they are all travelling on the thrust generated by all.

Whenever a goose falls out of formation it quickly gets back so that it can continue to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front.

If we have as much sense as a goose we will stay in formation with those who are headed where we want to go.

When the lead goose gets tired, it moves back into the formation and another goose flies at the point position.

It pays to take turns at doing the hard tasks- sharing leadership and maintaining interdependence.

The geese in formation 'honk' from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

We need to be sure that our 'honking from behind' is an encouragement to those who lead us.

When a goose gets sick, or wounded, or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow the one to help and protect it. They stay until it is able to fly again or dies.

In our fellowship as Christian people, we stand by each other in all circumstances.

Margaret Bevis (The Iona Community)

September Magazine Socials Task Group Report

We held our annual Family Fun Day and Barbecue combined with a Messy Club on 12th July. As with last year the weather was blisteringly hot, but the siting of the bouncy castle on the back lawn under the trees, keeping it shaded and cool, attracted a constant stream of youngsters anxious to expend boundless energy. Many of the adults, with less energy, were able to sit on the adjoining benches and seek respite from the heat. Everyone seemed to have an enjoyable afternoon and we look forward to doing it all again next year.

We are re-offering the coach trip to Webbs of Wychbold and the Church of the Sacred Heart in Droitwich early in October. (See page 16) This was cancelled earlier in the year.

Our next confirmed event is the Harvest Supper on the evening of October 17th from 5.30pm. It will consist of 2 courses, main and dessert, with tea or coffee and mints Further details will be published in early September.

Early November will feature our Autumn Fayre with Messy Club. We hope that you will join us in celebrating these remaining events, and look forward to welcoming you . **David Glanvill (Chair of the Socials Task Group)**

Thank you Sir John !

Who invented bank holidays in the UK?

Bank holidays were first introduced by a man named Sir John Lubbock who was a scientific writer, banker and politician, and the first Baron of Avebury.

In 1870 Lubbock entered parliament in order to champion his political passions. The following year he introduced the Bank Holidays Act which enshrined annual public holidays in law.

What were the first bank holidays?

The Act added the first four official bank holidays for England, Wales and Ireland: Easter Monday, Whit Monday, the first Monday in August, and Boxing Day to existing common law holidays, (Christmas and Good Friday), creating popular, mandatory paid time off for workers- often called "St Lubbock's Days". Scotland had a different pattern, recognising five holidays including New Year's Day.

Why do they say bank holiday?

Prior to 1871, banks were open nearly every day (!). The Act allowed banks to legally close, as they once did on certain saints' days permitting payments to be deferred to the next business day.

The word 'holiday'

In fact the word 'holiday' itself derives from Old English *haligdæg* "holy day, Christian festival, day consecrated to religious observance, religious anniversary; Sabbath", from *halig* "holy" + *dæg* "day".

Sally Churchus

'Come, ye thankful people, come'



In October as is our custom, we will be celebrating our Harvest Festival. For countless centuries farmers have gathered for a supper to celebrate the end of their harvest. After the bright light of the Harvest Moon has faded over the fields and the last of the corn has been gathered, the lights of the village halls were turned up high, rooms decorated, and food and drink produced in abundance: ready for the high-point of their social calendar, a chance for relaxation after a year's hard work, for thanksgiving and fellowship.

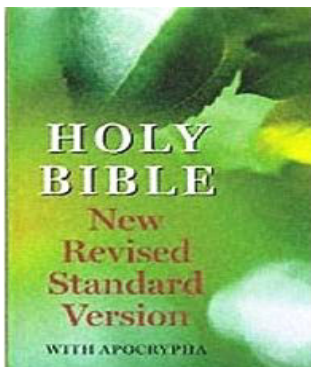
The Harvest Festival service is a more recent invention - usually credited to the 'eccentric' Victorian cleric Revd Robert Stephen Hawker who, in 1843 introduced a harvest thanksgiving service to his congregation in Mortenstow, the most northerly parish in Cornwall, six miles north of Bude.

Hawker's 'eccentricity' was perpetuated by his first biographer, the equally 'singular' Sabine Baring-Gould, who unreliably recorded Hawker's penchant for dressing up as a mermaid and excommunicating his cat for mousing on Sundays. A questionable contemporary source, Wikipedia, further reports that Hawker 'dressed in claret-coloured coat, blue fisherman's jersey, long sea-boots, a pink brimless hat and a poncho made from a yellow horse blanket, which he claimed was the ancient habit of St Padarn. He talked to birds, invited his nine cats into church and kept a pig as a pet.'

Thus unafraid of breaking the mould, Hawker was a pioneer of his time, a man with the imagination to connect the spirit of his community (from ancient times committed to their harvest feasts) to the thrust of holy scripture where in the Psalms the creator is praised for his generous provision, and bold enough to make of this connection a new form of service - which proved so popular that for many rural churches it remains the highlight of the year, larger than Christmas or Easter. People who never come otherwise were there. The churches will be full to overflowing.

So this Harvest, we should be looking forward to celebrating the hard work of all those who labour in the fields, whether with crops or livestock, or in the support industries which service them. We should be giving thanks for the example of Robert Stephen Hawker, whose pioneering spirit the church keenly needs again today.

READINGS FOR SEPTEMBER



September 6th **Creation in Christ**

10am Holy Communion Isaiah 55: 12-end, Colossians 1: 15-20, Matthew 8: 23-27

6.30pm Evensong Ezekiel 47: 1-12, Revelation 22: 1-5

September 13th **15th after Trinity**

8am Holy Communion Genesis 50:15-21, Romans 14:1-12, Matthew 18:21-35

10am Service of the Word Readings as at 8am

September 20th **16th after Trinity**

10am Holy Communion Jonah 3:10-4:11, Philippians 1:21-end, Matthew 20:1-16

6.30pm Evensong Ezekiel 33:23 and 33:30-34:10, Acts 26:1 and 9-25

September 27th **17th after Trinity**

8am Holy Communion Ezekiel 18:1-4 and 25-end, Philippians 2:1-13,
Matthew 21:23-32

10am Service of the Word Readings as at 8am

6.30pm Holy Communion Readings as at 8am



Environmental & Sustainability Calendar for your diary

September, October and November 2026

September

* Sept 1st to Oct 4th – **‘The Season of Creation’ / ‘Creationtide’** - Connect with nature and dedicate this time to God as the Creator and Sustainer of all life. The theme this year is “Living Water”, based on Ezekiel 47:1-12.

* Sept 1st to 30th – **‘Organic September’** - A month long campaign designed to encourage more people to try organic food.

* September 1st to 30th – **‘Second Hand September’** – An annual campaign led by Oxfam GB that challenges people to pledge to buy only second-hand items for 30 days to fight the environmental and social impacts of fast fashion.

* Sept 7th to 11th – **‘Zero Waste Week’** – A week for you to try to go ‘Zero Waste’.

* Sept 14th to 20th – **‘Recycle Week’** – A week to help everyone recycle more of the right things, more often.

* Sept 16th – **‘World Ozone Day’** – Global action for a cooler planet celebrates the Montreal Protocol and the transformative impact of its Kigali Amendment ten years after adoption.

* Sept 21st to Oct 4th – **‘Fairtrade Fortnight’** – an annual two-week promotional campaign organised by the Fairtrade Foundation to raise awareness about ethical trading and support for farmers and workers in developing countries.

* Sept 22nd – **‘World Car Day’** – Encouraging motorists to give up their cars for a day.

October

* Oct 1st – **‘World Vegetarian Day’** – Marks the annual start of Vegetarian Awareness Month, to share the joy and benefits of a plant-based lifestyle.

* Oct 1st to 31st – **‘Unblocktober’** – A national campaign across the UK to protect drains, sewers, and seas from pollution.

* Oct 14th – **‘International E-Waste Day’** – The 9th edition, turns the spotlight on Fast Tech. This day is to raise awareness of the problems of electronic/ electrical waste and encourage householders to recycle their electrical waste.

November

* Nov 1st to 30th – **‘World Vegan Month’** – A month to explore how plant-based choices benefit personal wellness and ecological sustainability.

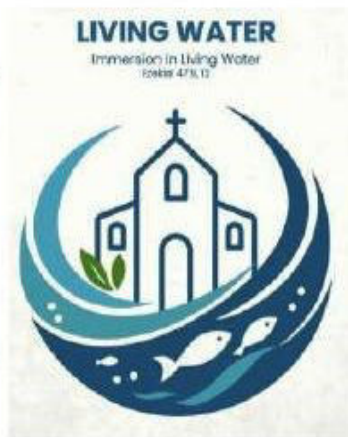
* November 9th to 20th – **‘COP 31’** – Hosted by the Government of Turkey in Antalya. The UNCCC convenes with a view to building on previous successes and paving the way for future ambition to effectively tackle the global challenge of climate change.

* Nov 28th – **‘Buy Nothing Day’** – A 24-hour detox from consumerism and an opportunity for you to tune into the impact we have on the environment through shopping.

Turning the Tide: Embodying 'Living Water' and a Second-Hand September

As we enter autumn, *The Season of Creation* (Sept 1st – Oct 4th) calls us to look closely at our role as stewards of the Earth. This year's powerful theme, 'Living Water', inspired by Ezekiel 47:1-12, paints a vibrant picture of a life-giving river flowing out from the temple, turning barren wilderness into flourishing ecosystems. It reminds us that our choices should nourish life rather than deplete it. Yet, our modern consumption habits often do the opposite, draining global water resources and polluting vital waterways.

A perfect way to put this theology into practice is by participating in Oxfam's Second Hand September. Fast fashion is notoriously one of the world's most water-intensive and polluting industries. By pledging to buy only second-hand items for 30 days, we directly combat the social and environmental toll of overproduction. Reusing items gives them a second life, saves thousands of litres of virtual water, and helps restore balance to the planet's ecosystems. Let your fashion choices flow toward restoration this month.



Small Steps, Big Impact From Zero Waste to World Car Free Day

True sustainability is often built from a series of small, daily decisions that ripple outward. September offers two incredible opportunities to challenge ourselves and reshape our habits: Zero Waste Week (Sept 7th – 11th) and World Car Free Day (Sept 22nd).

Zero Waste Week invites us to audit our bins and radically reduce what we send to landfills, proving that mindful grocery shopping and creative reusing can dramatically shrink our individual carbon footprint.

Shortly after, World Car Free Day invites us to step out of our vehicles and rediscover our local neighbourhoods on foot, by bike, or via public transport. Leaving the car behind for just 24 hours significantly slashes urban air pollution, lowers carbon emissions, and encourages us to advocate for greener, pedestrian-friendly communities. Combined, these initiatives show that when thousands of us make small changes together, the collective impact can transform our world.



Corinne Treacy (Parish Environment Contact)

New Church of England Flower Arrangements

Do you follow any blogs? Or maybe you're a blogger yourself. One of the several I follow calls himself 'The Opinionated Vicar' He tends to write 'tongue-in-cheek' articles about religion, politics and social issues. At the Church of England's General Synod last January, a motion was passed which read: *That this Synod, (a) embrace the principles of the Sustainable Church Flowers movement which encourages a living into the Fifth Mark of Mission by promoting the use of local, seasonal and fully biodegradable compostable flowers and foliage; (b) encourage cathedrals, churches and churchyards — wherever possible — to source flowers and foliage locally and seasonally for use in worship and church life; (c) call on cathedrals, churches and churchyards to eliminate the use of floral foam (oasis) and all similar non-biodegradable and non-reusable products and techniques, while rediscovering traditional and environmentally friendly methods of presentation and display.*

Following the Synod motion, 'The Opinionated Vicar' wrote the blog below which I'm sure might interest our Flower Arranging Group and many others.

(As I said, it is tongue-in-cheek)

Peter Stokes

Yesterday at a rowdy General Synod, the Church of England's governing body, the divisive topic of church flowers finally came out into the open. Features of the debate were:

The Archbishop of Canterbury promised 'radical new arrangements' for church flowers. Nobody knows what this means, but everyone is already upset or excited by it, or possibly both.

The Church will begin a 10 year process of reflection, called 'Learning about Leaves and Flowers' (LLF for short). This will include a 500 page book and a labyrinthine website with videos about different arrangements. The resource will be imposed on the church at an inconvenient time, and is intended to divert as much time and energy away from prayer and mission as possible.

The resulting Prayers for Leaves and Flowers will be produced by the Bishops. Hopes for arrangements for standalone flowers in services are expected to be met with a compromise, that flowers may be blessed but only when contained within something else.

Some clergy have made their own arrangements and are seeking to have them recognised. Traditionalists who can't accept the new arrangements are campaigning for Alternative Horticultural Oversight, and have set up The Carnation Fund, so that parishes can be sure their contributions aren't being spent on the wrong sort of foliage.

**PROPOSED VISIT TO WEBBS GARDEN CENTRE &
SACRED HEART CHURCH DROITWICH 10th October 2026**

Dear Friends of St. Faith & St. Laurence

We would like to invite you to join us on Saturday 10th October for a visit to:

Webbs of Wychbold and the Church of the Sacred Heart & St. Catherine of Alexandria in Droitwich.

Webbs is situated just off the M5 at junction 5 (about 30 minutes from here) and the Church of the Sacred Heart about 15 minutes further on.

The church has a magnificent array of mosaic panels, which have recently been refurbished by a team of experts in Italy.

The plan is to leave the church at 10am arriving at Webbs by 10.30am. You will have time to look around, do any shopping etc and get some Lunch. We will then leave at 1.30pm arriving at the Sacred Heart at 2.00pm. Leaving the Sacred Heart at 3.30pm we will arrive back at St. Faith & St. Laurence at 4.00pm.

The cost for the trip is £25.00 for Adults and £15 for children under 16. This will cover the cost of the coach, a donation to the Sacred Heart and a tip for the driver. We need a minimum of 30 adults to make the trip viable and if there are more it will reduce the ticket price.

We do hope that you, and any interested friends, will join us for what should be a special day.

If you would like to come please return the completed form to David Glanvill or a member of the Socials Task Group complete with a cheque or cash for your ticket/s by the **September 20th**. If the trip does not go ahead a full refund will be made.

David Glanvill

NAME.

No of tickets.

Payment

Readers !

2026 is the Year of Reading. The National Literacy Trust are concerned that nearly half of UK adults no longer read books for pleasure - possibly because of our smart phones.

A recent survey, by *Christianity* magazine, lists the 100 most influential and popular Christian books. The top five are:

5. *The Battlefield of the Mind* by Joyce Meyer
4. *Mere Christianity* by CS Lewis
3. *God's Smuggler* by Brother Andrew
2. *The Cross and the Switchblade* by David Wilkerson
1. *The Hiding Place* by Corrie Ten Boom

If you only read one book this year, why not read or re-read one of these top rated books?

Some more tips for our next vicar.

The one time you answer the phone in an amusing way will be the one time you wish you hadn't.

Just because you're on Twitter, it doesn't make you acceptable to the young.

No church hall booking system ever works properly.

Most church problems are sorted out by the people who know, in the car park afterwards. It's not worth having the original meeting at all, when you think about it.

Make sure you:

- have a regular day off, and an extra day off every now and again
- take your full complement of holidays
- have a retreat and regular quiet days
- go to conferences and teaching days in the wider church.

It's no use just having a clip-mic on. It does need to be near your mouth. And pointing towards it, too.

The length of a PCC discussion about finance will be in inverse proportion to the amount of money being discussed.

You are taking your first funeral. You are nervous. But you know more about what to do than the congregation does.

Banns of marriage might be an antiquated thing. But couples like to hear them, and that means new people in church. Don't waste the opportunity.

'Please remember to switch your mobile phone back on at the end of the service' is a neat way to remind people to turn them off.

Being more interested in the parents' Aston Martin than in their baby, is not good form on a baptism visit.

You don't necessarily have to say anything when you sit with someone who is dying. It's a privilege just to be there.

At funerals, maintain a dignified expression during 'Always look on the bright side of life'. Joining in with it does not play well.

Just because the microphone is there, it doesn't mean everyone will automatically hear you.

It's only when you're in the pulpit and coughing that you realise you're not sure whether the jug and glass have been there for five years without being changed.

The recycled sermon you use in desperation will be the only one someone remembers from the first time.

The best way of galvanising the 99% of your parish who never come to church, is to promise to remove a pew.

If you can't find something, look under the altar.

You were ordained so that you could use the word 'quinquennial' more than once every five years. That makes it all worthwhile.

Jeremy Fletcher (Former Vicar of Beverley Minster)

Church Pulpits

The Medieval pulpits were mostly to be found on top of the rood screen from where the priest could address the people in the nave. These early pulpits have nearly all disappeared, and the ones we can see today date from after the Reformation when the sermon became of more importance. An edict of 1603 stated that every church should be provided with 'a comely and decent pulpit'. Most pulpits were built at round this time and are made of wood or stone, or even marble or alabaster in a rich parish or a cathedral. They were a fine place for the stone masons or woodcarvers to practise their skill.



It is a steep climb of 199 steps that leads visitors in Whitby from the streets below to the church of St Mary's that stands near the ruined abbey.

Having negotiated the climb, which I have done several times, you enter the church and are greeted by a glorious array of Georgian furnishings: box pews and a triple-decker pulpit with candlesticks and cushions.

The clerk would sit at the bottom level to give out the notices, the parson would lead the service in the middle, and then he would ascend to the third level to expound the Word of God.

George Herbert says that for the country parson the pulpit should be '*his joy and his throne*'

Sydney Smith had a different slant when he wrote on going into the pulpit of All Saints Church Foston, Yorkshire in 1806; *"When I began to thump the pulpit cushion on my first coming to Foston, the accumulated dust of 150 years made such a cloud that for some minutes I lost sight of the congregation."*

Not so at Whitby, where the church is cared for and well loved. Today preachers often remain at ground level where it is better to interact with their congregations, but at St Mary's Church, Whitby the pulpit is a sign of the importance of teaching the Word: not because the preacher stands eight feet above contradiction but to allow people to see and hear.

The word 'pulpit' means a platform or raised area to address the gathered family of God. As we look on from the pews, it stands often on our left. But God looks at us from the east end of the church and the pulpit stands at his right hand. This is a sign that the sermon can be the divinely inspired message of prophet and teacher, and so become living and active in the minds and hearts of its hearers.

Peter Stokes

Honey and holiness



"The day the Queen died I went straight to the bees and told them, as is the tradition. There was a wonderful sense of calm, like they were listening," says the Right Revd. Graham Usher, the Bishop of Norwich and the Church of England's lead bishop for the environment, standing in the 900-year-old Bishop's House Garden of which he is the current custodian, and which opened to the public this summer.

The bishop's bees moved with him when he took up the post in 2019. (He was previously Bishop of Dudley) "I drove them in a van from Dudley - the next day I found one climbing up the inside of the window. The bee must have taken one sniff of the Norfolk air and decided to go back to the Midlands!"

Beekeeping began as a father and son project; when his son left home he decided to carry on alone. Three hives were lost last winter, although a visiting swarm arrived and the queen has started laying again.

The bees live in the meadow behind the formal herbaceous border, framed by a high brick wall and ancient rose beds, and they produce about eighty jars of honey in a good year. Has the bishop ever been stung? "Yes, just below my chin - that's when I lost my sculptured jaw!" was his reply. Appear anxious in the presence of bees, he warns, and they will know.

The rewards of going chemical-free are visible everywhere: orchids springing up, wild flowers emerging from the seed bank in the soil, insect life returning. "We are letting parts grow naturally and celebrating what comes," he says. It is a philosophy rooted in something much older than modern environmentalism.

The first gardeners here were the monks who lived, worked and worshipped at the cathedral and Benedictine monastery, growing plants for food and medicine. That legacy is very much alive. The bishop keeps a keen eye on the vegetable patch, growing produce mainly for events he hosts. "Asparagus is my favourite," he says. Composting is done on a two-year cycle and used as mulch.

Towering plane and tulip trees cast shade across the lawns. The herbaceous borders entrance is marked by coned yews shaped by Tom Halliburton, the head gardener and topiarist. The garden bursts with purple and pink: alliums jostling for space with *Persicaria bistorta*, peonies, globe artichokes, alstroemeria, wisteria and campion, not a weed in sight.

The hedge that frames it flows in a long, undulating curve - a happy accident of the First World War. "Before 1914 this garden had 12 gardeners and during the war the hedges were left to their own devices," the bishop says. "They lost their straight lines and developed this wonderful character."

On the top lawn a 700-year-old ruin known as Bishop Salmon's Porch is all that remains of a vast medieval hall. The nearby chapel, built in 1662, is now used as a library by Norwich School.

"What I love about this garden are the different rooms," the bishop says. There is a white garden created to mark baby loss, planted with hornbeam and wisteria - a beautiful, peaceful space. A further secluded garden "room" hosts a tradition begun during the pandemic, where men and women about to be ordained take their oaths to King and bishop, making their declarations of faith among the flowers. Animals share the garden too - the bishop's springer spaniels, two muntjac deer and a friendly partridge that returns every year without fail.

Spirituality runs quietly throughout. "I give a hazelnut tree to each person who is confirmed," he says. "Mother Julian of Norwich held something like a hazelnut in her hand and saw in it the entirety of creation. The story of gardens runs through the Bible - there is something about encountering God in a place where you work with nature to create something beautiful."

A small team of volunteers comes twice a week to help Tom Halliburton and, just as importantly, to boost their own mental health in the fresh air.

Together they prepare the garden for open days running from May to the end of July. Last year 3,000 people visited, raising more than £20,000. This year donations will benefit a range of charities including Big C, Norwich Door to Door and the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. On the first open day this year between 500 and 600 people came through the gates.

The garden also sells potted plants, including hebe grown from a cutting taken from Queen Victoria's wedding bouquet in 1840. Cuttings were later given to Queen Elizabeth for her Silver Jubilee in 1977, to Diana, Princess of Wales for her 1981 wedding bouquet and planted at Sandringham for the 2002 Golden Jubilee.

It is, in every sense, a garden with a living history: tended by monks, shaped by wars, blessed by bishops and open this summer to anyone who wants to walk through the gate.

Annie Hayes

Do you believe in angels?

A well-known sweet course that I've enjoyed since childhood, and over the years is 'Angels' Delight' – a description suggesting that this dessert is the most delicious concoction in the universe, and even the angels in heaven would be delighted to taste a portion. But joking apart, what do we mean by angels; and do we seriously believe in them?

The word angel comes from a Greek word meaning a messenger; the Hebrew word for an angel means the same. In the Old Testament we hear of Jacob's dream, when he saw a ladder or stairway from earth to heaven, with angels coming down to bring God's message of hope, joy and guidance to humans, and returning to take our prayers up to God. The Bible tells us that angels are spiritual beings, created by God in the beginning, before the earth was founded, and who rejoiced when creation was completed.

The Bible doesn't tell us what angels look like; in fact sometimes they appear as ordinary human beings, and can't be recognised as angels, so that, as the Epistle to the Hebrews says, 'some have entertained angels unawares.' Later, Jacob thought he was wrestling with an angel and only later did he realise that it was God himself, disguised as an angel. Abraham gave hospitality to three angels, who then became one, and Christians have seen this as an appearance of the Holy Trinity. But then, if there really are spiritual beings who carry God's messages, they don't have a physical body, and can appear in any form they choose.

Hebrews asks, 'are not all angels spirits in the divine service, sent to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?' And spirits are not bound by the laws of time and space as we are. So we can't expect to understand very much about them, and there is no scientific way of proving whether or not they exist. Jesus said that in the resurrection we shall be like the angels in heaven, who neither marry nor are given away in marriage. All thoughts of property rights and inheritance are irrelevant when we are talking about beings without physical bodies.

Some people seem to have a deep faith in God, but never give the angels a second thought. Others claim a close relationship with their own guardian angel. Jesus said there's joy in the presence of the angels when one sinner repents, and for some Christians that's enough to prove they exist. But it may be better to think of them as a poetic way of saying that there are many things in the universes which we can never understand, but which have a great influence upon us. Poetic references to angels may be a way of leading us to contemplate the mystery of God and of the afterlife.

The feast of St Michael and All Angels (Michaelmas) is one of my favourite festivals, and falls on September 29th. A little bit of anonymous light verse with which I conclude, like most poetry and much humour, conceals a serious point. It's an attempt to talk about God's spiritual messengers in the language of modern science. And why not, if that helps modern, scientifically educated people to imagine the unimaginable – to conceive of beings which are not subject to the laws of science, but which act upon the physical world in ways beyond our understanding? But then the poem ends with a reference to the delight which angels experience in doing what God has created them for, and reminds us of that delicious dessert:

ANGELS' DELIGHT

We soar at a velocity
Exceeding thought or sight,
With boundless curiosity
At twice the speed of light.

In new dimensions listening,
Discovering God's will,
And then fly fast as glistening
His wishes to fulfil.

We travel without tarrying
Through universal space,
Obediently carrying
God's messages of grace;

And endlessly, with clarity,
Through depth and width and height
Proclaiming heaven's charity,
The angels' one delight.



Chris Price

RAIN AT LAST

It has been good to have rain at last, after such a prolonged dry spell — indeed, drought. The first thing that alerted me to the long-awaited advent of rain was the sound. Dramatic at first, as it drummed on our roof, then, after that opening fanfare, more gentle and melodic, its pattering patterns coming and going in the breeze, and in the grateful sound of rain on leaves.

Poets, who must by nature be sensitive to the music of language, are also by extension listening for music in everything. In Seamus Heaney's poem "The Rainstick", he opens with a promise: ". . . what happens next Is a music that you never would have known To listen for." And, a couple of lines later, we hear the music and see vividly the rain in the mellifluous lines: "Downpour, sluice-rush spillage and backwash Come flowing through. . ."

But, along with the sounds, there are the sights: the glad leaves and grass dampening, and, one hopes, eventually greening again, the lovely interlacing patterns of ripples in concentric rings on almost exhausted ponds and pools, and people in the streets rejoicing visibly to feel the rain on their faces. The Scottish poet Don Paterson has a glorious visual evocation in the opening stanza of his famous poem "Rain":

*I love all films that start with rain:
rain, braiding a windowpane
or darkening a hung-out dress
or streaming down her upturned face.*

But, if one wants a deep, luscious, almost visceral appreciation of rain, at once rooted and grounded in the earth and open to the heavens above, one need look no further than the poetry of the Bible, and that gorgeous sequence in Psalm 65: Thou visitest the earth, and blessest it: thou makest it very plenteous. The river of God is full of water: thou preparest their corn, for so thou providest for the earth. Thou waterest her furrows, thou sendest rain into the little valleys thereof: thou makest it soft with the drops of rain, and blessest the increase of it.

The great trees that I can see from my study window have been drinking, but they have not yet drunk their fill; so, I will be continuing to pray that petition in the Prayer Book — "Send us, we beseech thee, in this our necessity, such moderate rain and showers, that we may receive the fruits of the earth to our comfort, and to thy honour" — in the hope that later I can pray the thanksgiving for the same: "O God our heavenly Father, who by thy gracious providence dost cause the former and the latter rain to descend upon the earth, that it may bring forth fruit for the use of man: We give thee humble thanks that it hath pleased thee, in our great necessity, to send us at the last a joyful rain upon thine inheritance, and to refresh it when it was dry, to the great comfort of us thy unworthy servants, and to the glory of thy holy Name; through thy mercies in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Malcolm Guite

A Message from Laurie

As you may know I was required to move last year. This was not my choosing at all I can assure you ! Up to now, things worked out quite well so far.

This doesn't help answer the deeper question, about why God doesn't answer prayers all the time the way we want, when we want.

What my experience has taught me, is I can trust God regarding my future. I may not always know the next piece or place at my future although I can trust God's presence to be there which is like a Birthday or Christmas present guiding my future. I am not saying this is easy. I am meaning God has a plan better than any plan I may have.

As it is written " For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord. Plans to give you a hope and a future " (Jeremiah 29). I hope this encourages someone.

Blessings, Laurie Deimel

On a lighter note....

These howlers, are said to have come from a school test on the books of the bible.

Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree.

Noah's wife was Joan of Ark. Noah built an ark and the animals came on in pairs.

Lots wife was a pillar of salt during the day, but a ball of fire during the night.

The Jews were a proud people, and throughout history they had trouble with unsympathetic genitals.

Samson slew the Philistines with the Axe of the Apostles.

The Egyptians were all drowned in the dessert. Afterwards, Moses went up to Mount Cyanide to get the ten commandments.

The first commandment was when Eve told Adam to eat the apple.

The seventh commandment is thou shalt not admit adultery.

The greatest miracle in the Bible is when Joshua told his son to stand still and he obeyed him.

David was a Hebrew king who was skilled at playing the liar. He fought the Finkelsteins, a race of people who lived in biblical times.

Solomon, one of David's sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines.

When Mary heard she was the mother of Jesus, she sang the Magna Carta.

Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption.

Jesus enunciated the golden rule which says to do unto others before they do one to you.

The people who followed the Lord were called the ten decibels.

The Epistles were the wives of the Apostles.

St Paul cavorted to Christianity. He preached Holy Acrimony which is another name for marriage.

Christians have only one spouse. This is called monotony.

Dennis Smith

A few days away

People take holidays at all times of the year these days, but traditionally one tends to think of the holiday season slowing down in September. Children are returning to school, the days are getting shorter and so perhaps, like me, you have had your break and are settling back into the various weekly routines as autumn approaches.

We tend to take our annual holiday for granted, but in fact this became a reality for everyone only about 150 years ago. Prior to that, the only breaks were Holy Days - days set aside by the church for religious observance. For Christians in this country, because of our history, many Holy Days have become holidays anyway - Christmas, Easter, Good Friday and so on. I recall that at my primary school, Ascension Day was a day off too. People of other faiths have their own Holy Days.

The notion of an annual holidays for everyone began within industry in the 1840s; the mills of Lancashire would be a good example. Each year the mill owners needed to service the machinery and so they closed the factory for a week and the workers were given time off - unpaid at first, but that was corrected in 1906 when each worker was guaranteed 12 days holiday, which included Bank Holidays. The 12 days increased to 15 in 1915. All the towns in Lancashire took a different week off and so from June to September each week saw one town on holiday.

The second half of the 1800s coincided with the growth of the railways and so people would take the train to the seaside - hence the development of seaside resorts such as Blackpool and Scarborough. I have fond childhood memories of family summer holiday weeks in both of those resorts and at Whitley Bay. These staggered weeks in the industrial areas were known as Wakes Weeks and were held very dear by residents of the said towns.

It is interesting that as well as holiday having its origins in Holy Day, the word Wakes also had religious roots. It was from an old English word 'weacan' which denoted a vigil before a church festival day. Over the centuries, the word became more generally associated with the festivities themselves.

Holidays as we think of them, would be unknown to the people of the Bible but that is not to say that they did not take time off - the Law commanded them to observe various religious festivals; Leviticus Chapter 23 gives a comprehensive list!

But a final thought. One of the things I have always enjoyed is time away visiting relatives or friends - wonderful little holidays in themselves. There is that beautiful story in Luke (Ch 1) which tells of Mary - upon hearing she was to have a baby - going to have a little break with her cousin Elizabeth. It is a very human story and it must have happened in all families, as it does now.

Perhaps they did have holidays of sorts after all.

Geoffrey Lowson

Celebrating a remarkable gift

Church of England Birmingham are delighted to celebrate the remarkable artistic gift of Anglo-Catholic Missioner Mthr Charlotte Gibson, whose ministry extends beyond the Diocese into the ancient and beautiful tradition of Christian iconography. To mark Archbishop Sarah's departure from the Diocese of London and consecration as Archbishop of Canterbury, Mthr Charlotte had the honour of writing and presenting a bespoke icon of Esther.



This striking image will take pride of place in the Christian Chapel at the Invictus Games in Birmingham 2027, where it will offer a focus for prayer, reflection and encounter. A printed version will also be available for visitors to take away as a lasting reminder of God's presence and hope.

Bishop Michael said: *"We give thanks for Charlotte's creativity, skill and faithful witness, and pray that through these beautiful icons many people will be drawn more deeply into the wonderful love of Christ."*



A former director of the Church of England's national Cathedral and Church Buildings team, Becky Clark, is to be the Archbishop of Canterbury's Chief of Staff. Ms Clark will be the principal adviser to the Archbishop of Canterbury and, according to the statement, will "provide oversight of the support given to Archbishop Sarah's ministry. She will hold a broad range of relationships and represent the Archbishop across the Church of England and Anglican Communion, as well as with the Royal Household, Parliament, other denominations, and faith groups."

Becky is daughter of Barry, who was previously Minister of Harborne Baptist Church and worshiped with us on many occasions following his retirement.

Hymn of the month

Angel voices, ever singing

Round Thy throne of light,
Angel harps, forever ringing,
Rest not day or night;
Thousands only live to bless Thee
And confess Thee Lord of might.

This hymn was written and composed to mark the establishment of a new organ in a Lancashire church. William Macrorie, Dean of St John the Evangelist at Wingates asked his friend Francis Pott to write a hymn for the occasion. Pott's verses, set to the music of Dr Edwin Monk, really capture the delight of singing with the organ to the glory of God. Francis Pott was best known as a translator of hymns, who edited hymnals and contributed to *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. He apparently did not rate his own compositions highly, claiming that there was nothing interesting to say about them. But 'Angel Voices' is evidence to the contrary; it is an original work and catches beautifully the actual and special experience of standing up together in church and singing hymns.

This hymn tune is also one of Edwin George Monk's finest. As well as being a notable organist, he composed many hymns, choral concert works, anthems and the librettos of three oratorios. Composing music for a new organ must have been a task close to Edwin Monk's heart. He was organist of York Minster for 24 years.

John Betjeman considered church organists to be a splendid breed of people, 'often eccentric, sometimes doctrinaire, seldom anonymous. It's hard to hide your light under a bushel, when all that huge potential of sound is at your fingers — and feet.' And the members of this splendid breed have made a real contribution to the composition of church music.

There are some great lines in this hymn. One of my favourites, the beautifully crafted 'Thou didst ears and hands and voices / For Thy praise design / Craftsman's art and music's measure / For Thy pleasure all combine'.

And the final verse — you really don't get much better than 'Honour, glory, might and merit / Thine shall ever be'. It's the punctuation marks that really make it, allowing you to pronounce every word, 'honour' — 'glory' - 'might' - 'merit'. The whole rhythm of the thing gives it an impressive dignity. 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit / Blessed Trinity'. It's just so majestic.

I've said it before about other hymns, but this hymn does exactly what it says on the tin: it is unadulterated praise of God.

Peter Stokes

Country diary: 'It's hard being a vicar in a long, hot summer.'

Every summer, while roasting in my robes, I say to myself: "I must get a lighter set." If I had a cotton cassock instead of a polyester cassock and alb, swaying to the singing of hymns might not raise my core temperature as much. In that regard, this year hasn't been without its challenges.

Even so, our churches have become "cool spaces". In Madley towards the end of term I received a call from Mr Batstone, headteacher of the primary school, wondering if classes could be held in church. Madley parish church is huge, with room in the nave for each class and a cool, subterranean crypt. I headed over later that week to find the church buzzing with children.

We've also had our summertime pet blessing, to celebrate the more-than-human community. After a dynamic risk assessment, a bowl of water was supplied for the dogs and the door kept wide open. Unfortunately, we cannot open the stained glass windows.

I usually bring an earthworm to the service to highlight that the least glamorous animals can be the most important, but when I dug the garden there were none – they had dived deep to find moisture. This year I was concerned that a visiting guinea pig called Pippa might be eaten by one of the attending dogs; I needn't have worried, as our canine congregation were more settled than I had ever seen them, panting with exhaustion after their morning walk.

The irony is that Madley church is notoriously cold. At one midnight mass, the temperature by the altar was -15C. Even with the recent heat-waves, Felicity and Claire brought jumpers to the Saturday communion – at the door, the welcomer, Carol, said: "For the first time ever you won't be needing those."

The conversations afterwards in the porch are about the harvest and the smoke from the Bannau Brycheiniog fires. Winter barley yields are good, but the spring-sown cereals are too dry in the grain. While local farmers struggle to produce food and wildlife dies in the blazes, I lament that we appear to have failed the biblical mandate to care for the Earth. The worst of the heat has passed now, but even so, I must invest in those lighter robes!

Madley is a village in Herefordshire. The church is dedicated to The Nativity of the Blessed Mary, an unusual dedication. When I visited the church at the start of a pilgrimage to Hereford Cathedral, I broke through cobwebs to enter the Holy Crypt, finding its hidden door behind an ancient box pew. At the bottom of a narrow flight of steps is a vaulted chamber where a famous miracle-working statue of the Virgin Mary once stood. Though empty and peaceful now, it once received so many pilgrims that a second staircase had to be installed. There is now an altar there and a colourful modern wall painting behind it.

Peter Stokes

**Exhibition of Paintings & Prints by Frances Carr
at Birmingham Midland Institute, B3 3BS from 28th September.**

The ASSOCIATION of MIDLAND ARTISTS would like to introduce Frances Carr, Carey Moon & John Hunt's ARTWORKS in the Reception area at BMI. Unframed Prints & Cards of Paintings available.

FRANCES CARR is looking forward to seeing you at the exhibition. I will be present in the Reception area every WEDNESDAY afternoon.

A prayer for Creationtide

*Creator God, we give thanks
that we have heard the Spirit of God
in the freshening leaves
and the rush of water.
So we pray for the creation
which nourishes and sustains all that lives.
Renew in us the sense of its value
that we may not squander its riches,
or so bend it to our will
that we find we have destroyed it.*

Kathy Galloway



Mobile phone v The Bible

*What would happen if we treated our Bible as we treat our mobile phone?
What if we carried it around in our purses or pockets?
What if we flipped through it several times a day?
What if we turned back to go get it if we forgot it?
What if we used it to receive messages from the text?
What if we treated it as though we couldn't live without it?
What if we gave it to our children as a gift?
What if we used it when we travelled?
What if we used it in case of emergency?
Unlike our mobile, we don't have to worry about our Bible being disconnected
because of an unpaid bill.
Jesus has already paid the bill, in full.
And just think – no dropped calls! God hears them all!*

Thanks to All Saints and St. John's Hove magazine.

Quotes

You want to be present but you can't always be. You rush from one thing to the next, from visiting a sick person to a coffee morning. . . I'm driving about 350 miles a month. **Clive Wylie, rector in Norwich diocese.** (Article about multi-parish benefices)

Taxing churches is taking money away from social action. They would be doing food banks, homeless shelters, Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, debt counselling, amateur music making, mum and toddler groups. The money funding those activities isn't infinite and they need to make up for the losses somewhere.

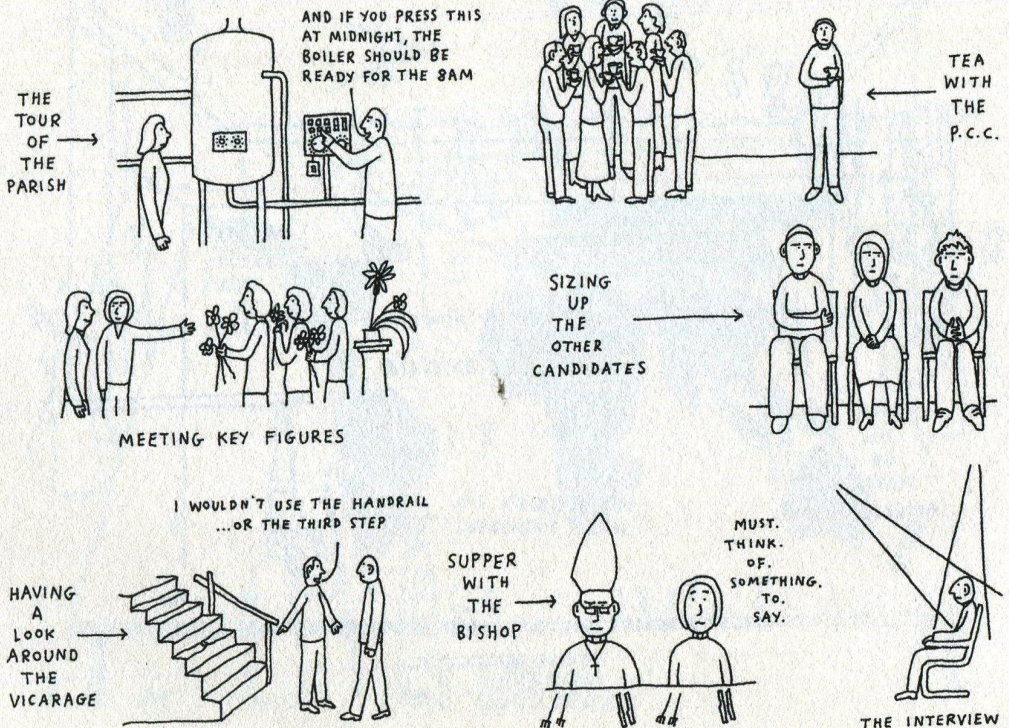
Ben Sims, head of policy at the National Churches Trust.

"The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain."

Dolly Parton (1946-2026)

INTERVIEWING

FOR A NEW VICAR



Thanks to Dave Walker

**THE PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT FAITH AND SAINT LAURENCE
HARBORNE B17 8RD**

At the junction of Balden and Croftdown Road

Registered Charity Number 1134152

SERVICES

SUNDAY 8am HOLY COMMUNION 2nd, 4th and 5th SUNDAYS

10am FAMILY COMMUNION 1st, 3rd and 5th SUNDAYS

SERVICE OF THE WORD 2nd and 4th SUNDAYS

6.30pm EVENSONG and SERMON

1st, 3rd and 5th SUNDAYS

6.30pm HOLY COMMUNION 4th SUNDAY

MORNING PRAYER: 8.30am MONDAYS, TUESDAYS and THURSDAYS-IN LADY CHAPEL

WEDNESDAYS:11am HOLY COMMUNION-IN LADY CHAPEL

CHURCH CONTACT

Mobile: Email: ssfaithlaurence@gmail.com

MINISTRY TEAM

Priest- in-Charge: REVD. DAVID PARKER

Mobile: 07532 338961

Email:davidparker124@btinternet.com

Licensed Reader: SALLY GRIFFITHS Ed.D., M.Ed.

Mobile: 07940 758396

E-mail: sallyegriff@gmail.com

OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH:

Churchwardens: CAROLINE MOSLEY Email: caromosley1@gmail.com

Mobile: 07887552123

DAVID GLANVILL Email: davidglanvill@yahoo.co.uk Mobile: 07710 863659

P.C.C. Secretary: HELEN SETCHELL

Email: ssfaithlaurence@gmail.com

P.C.C. Treasurer: LOLETA ATKINSON

471 1248

Electoral Roll:

DEE COYNE

Email: deeb15@hotmail.co.uk

Director of Music: MARK LAWRENCE

Mobile: 07752 900456

Bell Ringers Leader: CORINNE TREACY

Mobile: 07752640151

Church Hall Bookings: Please contact Judith Bennett 07983400846

Email: Judith.e.bennett48@gmail.com

Church Hall may be contacted in an emergency on: 428 2406

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

Editor: Peter Stokes Mobile: 07980346350

E-mail: peterstokes@talk21.com

Advertising Manager: Corinne Treacy Mobile: 07752640151

Email: corinneftreacy@gmail.com

PARISH WEBSITE:- www.saintfaithandsaintlaurence.co.uk