

SOLIHULL PARISH NEWS



No. 560

OCTOBER 2024

PRICE £1.00

TEAM CHURCHES

St ALPHEGE - The Square, Solihull B91 3RH

St HELEN - St Helen's Road, Solihull B91 2DA

St MICHAEL - Bryanston Road, Solihull B91 1BS



St Alphege (Sundays)

8.00 a.m. Said Eucharist
10.30 a.m. Sung Eucharist except:
Sunday 9.15 a.m. All Age Eucharist 13th October
11.00 a.m. Choral Eucharist 13th October
5.00 p.m. Evensong except 13th October
Monday, Thursday and Friday 9.00 a.m. Morning Prayer
Thursdays 10.30 a.m. Said Eucharist

The Junction

9.15 a.m. Junction in person at the OBH on Sunday 6th and 20th October
The Junction joins the Sunday club at 10 a.m. at St Helen's on 27th October

St Helen

Sundays 10.00 a.m. Holy Communion
Third Sunday 10.00 a.m. Morning Praise
Tuesdays 9.00 a.m. Morning Prayer
Sunday Club 10 a.m. 27th October

St Michael at Sharmans Cross School on Sundays

10.30 a.m. Eucharist.

St. Michael's Chapel, Bryanston Road on Wednesdays

9.30 a.m. Morning Prayer
10 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Friday

9.30 a.m. **Praise and Play** – please e-mail Linda Hicks l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk

Full details on the homepage of the Parish website at: <https://www.solihullparish.org.uk>

Please don't hesitate to contact the Revd. Nick Parker or another priest if you need help in an emergency or any support (full contact details inside the back cover) or phone the Parish Office on 0121 705 5350. It is always a pleasure to talk to you.

WEDDING AND BAPTISM ENQUIRIES

Please contact the Parish Office:
life.events@solihullparish.org.uk

The Revd. Nick Parker
The Revd. Simon Marshall
The Revd. Sue Chandler

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THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Visit our Website

www.solihullparish.org.uk

Want to email the Editor?
parishnews@solihullparish.org.uk

Cover picture

**The interior of St. Alphege showing
the new lighting**

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Out for Delivery

Not a day goes by without various vans and cars laden with parcels and groceries travelling down our little road making deliveries. I well remember in the early days of internet shopping saying that the whole idea would stand or fall on the efficiency of actual delivery and reliable receipt of what had been so easily found, ordered and paid for by a click or tap on a screen. The volume of delivery traffic rather makes the point that the whole online phenomenon has been a considerable success. The success, however, also raises our expectations. How frustrating it is when delivery isn't as instant as we would like it to be. Or even worse when the goods are faulty, wrong or delivered to the wrong address. Despite the occasional hiccup though I guess most of us are regular users of online shopping.

I wondered if there are any parallels between the ordering and delivery of items online and our attitudes and experience of prayer? Jesus encourages to ask, seek and knock in order to receive, find and discover. We are encouraged to pray. Often in the Old Testament people are rebuked for their failure to consult God about matters great and small. We are thrilled when prayers are answered and amazed when we see and hear wonderful stories of healing and restoration.

But, along with online shopping, is there a parallel frustration and dissatisfaction when delivery apparently is held up or even fails? Not all of our prayers seem to be answered, or at least answered in the way and time we expect. We see loved ones for whom we pray for healing for whom physical cure does not arrive. We pray constantly for peace and the righting of wrongs in our suffering world, but sometimes the news seems to mock those longings. Alongside praises and testimonies to the loving interventions of God in the book of Psalms, there are also Psalms lamenting late or missing deliveries!

So is God less reliable than Amazon? Prayer is a paradox. God can and does intervene in our world and situations and does not sit remotely from us. However, He also respects our freedom and isn't constantly intervening and suspending the laws of nature for our individual benefit. The parallel between online shopping and prayer breaks down if we merely view prayer as a celestial shopping list. The idea being that if we have enough resources in the form of faith, what we want will be instantly dispatched and delivered from the heavenly warehouse. Prayer is much more than giving God a list! Prayer is about relationship, being in the presence of God not just to ask but to be still and listen. There can be something very impersonal about the concept of delivery. We are told the schools are "delivering" the curriculum, politicians are "delivering" their policies. There is often no personal contact between the deliverer and recipient. We had a lovely postie before he retired. He knew when we were on holiday, knew when items had been wrongly addressed, was careful in all weathers to do his job with a smile and friendly chat. He knew me rather too well when he would hold a handful of packages and say "What are these then, more books, plants or Leicester City stuff?"

God knows our needs even before we ask. But he is much more than a mere dispenser of goods and services. Sometimes he will seem to say no, or even take time to answer. Wonderfully he will deliver over and above what we asked for. He will even ask us to deliver some of the blessings we've requested to others. The fact that Jesus lived our life and walked the earth shows that God knows, shares and understands our longings and frustrations. Jesus tells us that God is not distant but rather a loving parent who knows how to give good gifts to his children. The love we have for our nearest and dearest is a pale reflection of the love God has for each of us. We are his children, but nevertheless not spoilt children! Even Jesus had unanswered prayers in Gethsemane. Ultimately, we believe that God will say enough is enough to the bad guys of this world and will one day sort everything out. Our prayers will even help that to happen as our relationship as well as our online order grows and develops.

The wonderful hymn Guide me O Thou Great Redeemer has the words

"Strong deliverer

Strong Deliverer

Be thou still my help and shield"

Revd. Roger Chamberlain

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Roundabout

Last Churchyard Tidy-up Morning of the Year The Great Leaf Gather Saturday 2nd November 2024 10.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

Can you come and join in the Great Leaf Gather-up in the churchyard this year even if only for an hour? Great fun especially for families to have some time together in the fresh air. The usual refreshments will be provided half-way through the morning. All necessary equipment and gloves will be provided. We would normally expect to gather up over 120 black bags full, so even if you only fill one it is still a great help.

The idea is to clear the churchyard to enable a final grass cut to be carried out the following week so that everywhere is as safe as possible for everybody who turns out to participate in the Remembrance Day memorial service the following Sunday.

Michael Rumball

Successful Fund-raiser for Breast Cancer U.K.

On Saturday 17th August John Smith organised a very successful tea party in the Oliver Bird Hall in aid of Breast Cancer UK. He did most of the baking himself, with help from a few others and there was a wonderful selection of delicious cakes which were very much enjoyed by all who came along. A big thank you to all those who supported this event and especially to those who worked hard to assist John with the serving and clearing up and of course to John himself.

£430 was raised. The photo shows John with two of his main helpers!



Second Saturday monthly Bible Study Group

There is a long-established informal Bible Study Group held on the second Saturday each month from 10.30 a.m. – 11.30 a.m. which now meets in the church. Numbers have been growing lately and it is open to anybody who is interested. In October it will be on Saturday 12th and further details should be in the pewslip in the week before.

Parish Christmas Card

Once again we have high quality Parish Christmas cards and we encourage everyone to buy them. The cards are now available from the Bookstall in church, from the Parish Office or by contacting Fran Halstead (07710 329030, fran.halstead@gmail.com). The picture this year is a reproduction of an original watercolour by Edward Girard. It imagines a scene of the choir singing carols around a Christmas tree in the square with the church lit up ready to welcome the congregation. The packs are £5 for 10 cards. Please buy while stocks last and support the Bookstall which distributes its profits to selected charities. The Bookstall also continues to sell an excellent range of cards and books for all occasions at modest prices. Please do support it.



Refreshments after the Second Sunday 11 a.m. Service

A generous donation has been made from the proceeds of the monthly refreshments towards the repair of the floodlighting at St. Alphege. In October and November there will not be refreshments after the 11 a.m. services as on 13th October there will be the Bring and Share Harvest Lunch in the Oliver Bird Hall at 12.30 p.m. and on 10th November the Service of Remembrance will take place. After the 11 o'clock service on 8th December there will be refreshments.

A Thank-you Message from Revd. Sue

As some of you may be aware, I retired on 19th July as Parish Children's Worker. And as you can imagine, after 19 plus years, it was a very emotional day, and one which did not go by without the shedding of (quite a few!) tears.

The day started with farewells from the members of Praise and Play, a wonderful time spent in pre-school with the little ones and the staff, where I received a lovely gift of flowers, and even more special, some little books which the children had prepared for me to say goodbye. Thank you, Ben and Tammy. And then on to Messy Church, my final event as a member of staff, where Linda reminded me of some of the things we have done together over the years and presented me with a beautiful 'memory book' filled with photographs of my time in post. I had never realised how many photographs she has taken over our time together. There were so many memories contained within its covers, and it will be one of my most treasured possessions. I also received a most generous gift from Andrew Williams, parish warden, on behalf of the parish and our congregations, and I would like to say a huge thank you for such a lovely gift. I have long wanted a new green stole which I have now been able to order. Every time I wear it, I shall remember so many happy years with colleagues, the children and their families. And of course, being a priest, I have also bought some books for future reading!

If I thanked everyone by name who has helped me over the years, and with whom I have worked, I would need the entire magazine! To all of our wonderful volunteers, without whom we could not have achieved what we have for the children and their families, thank you for offering your many skills and talents. Your wonderful work has helped so many children, and their parents, to know and come closer to God. It has been an absolute privilege to work with you all.

To colleagues past and present, thank you for your friendship and support. To the children with whom we have worked and their families, it was a joy to know you and share some of your journey. And finally, to my friend and colleague Linda, with whom I have shared so much joy and laughter over the years, and yes, as she said at Messy Church, some tough times as well; it has been a huge joy and privilege to work with you.

Thank you (literally) for the wonderful memories, and for being there for me through some tough times, and thank you for all of the laughter. I would not swap a second of our time together. It was a privilege.

Of course, I hope that I shall still be around as a priest in the parish. And I strongly suspect that I will be back working with the children as a volunteer!

In the meantime, I wish Linda and Tammy great joy and God's blessing, as they continue their crucial work with the children and families in our parish.

Revd. Sue



HARVEST BRING & SHARE LUNCH

SUNDAY 13TH OCTOBER

OLIVER BIRD HALL

12.30pm to eat at 1.00pm

Musical and Surprise Entertainment

All welcome!



Offers of help to Pam Price: colandpam@ic24.net 0121 704 3104

Guild of Ringers Getting to Know our Tower Keeper

At our A.G.M. on a cold evening in January, Kathryn Price-Feraud took the plunge and agreed to become our Tower Keeper. Mike, after 35 years in the role, understandably decided it was time to stand down. Whilst the bells of Solihull will always belong to and be the responsibility of the Church, the local band takes on the maintenance of the bells and their installation. This is the job of the Tower Keeper. With many tons of metal swinging nearly 100 steps above our parishioners' heads, I'm sure you can imagine, this really is a key position for our Guild of Ringers.

Kathryn's connection to the bells of Solihull goes back a fair way. Some 48 years ago she climbed the stairs of the tower for her first ringing lesson with the wonderful Tom Warner, a very well-respected ringer of his time. Kathryn's younger brother, a close friend of the Tower Captain's son, was given the opportunity to learn to ring and Kathryn was caught up in the fun! She had a slight build and would often be stood on two boxes to be able to reach!



Kathryn's ringing came on in leaps and bounds until the lure of university took her to Edinburgh. Working in Scotland, moving to France and three children later I'm afraid she'd drifted from her ringing but not her friendship with the band. She stayed in touch, in particular exchanging Christmas cards with Richard Cann, a stalwart of the band for oh so many years. Her connection with the Church has always been very strong, she'd attended services at St. Alphege as a child so, it was only natural to have a blessing here a few weeks after being married in France. Of course, the band were quick to embrace her and ring for the service as we did again recently when Kathryn and Pierre were celebrating their 30th anniversary.

Richard's Christmas cards always looked forward to a time when we might see her back in the fold. So, having returned to the UK and her children grown up, she embarked on a kind of bucket list which included visiting us. Ringing is like riding a bike

so whilst a little intimidating at first, she quickly settled back in. Walking into the ringing room

Roundabout

after all that time brought back so many memories, the sound of the bells a homecoming, nothing had really changed even the smell in the air and certainly the warm welcome was just as before. Kathryn recognised half the band as people she'd known in the 1970s!

In the last year Kathryn has shown a real interest in all that Mike has done for us as Tower Keeper and the huge wealth of knowledge he's gained in looking after our bells. So, she volunteered to help him when it came to installing a set of new ropes. Keen to capture his experience she's started a local guide, taking notes and photographs as a tower record. Mike has learnt so much hands-on, learning from other ringers and even our bell founders. She's passionate about capturing these details and passing the knowledge on. Last Autumn never mind just asking questions, Mike had her doing the work and, over a series of weeks, the ropes were fitted.

Having agreed to 'step up to the plate', Kathryn, not one to do things by halves, embarked on Tower Keeper training. Taking with her a colleague from the band, they secured places on a course being run by the Worcestershire Guild of Ringers. Totally enthused, armed with a Central Council of Church Bell Ringers Guide for Tower Keepers and supported by their website, she's up and running!

The work of a Tower Keeper is never done. Coming back to the cycling analogy, she's currently riding with stabilisers. Mike is supporting her all the way and we're loving seeing her confidence grow as he gently steps away. At the time of chatting to her, she has much on her to-do list. We have a visiting band coming to ring a 3 - hour extent, so before then there will be visual checks for each bell and their ropes. The tail ends (the bit we hold when we ring) need their next dose of rope lubricant and the clappers are to be greased. Kathryn's waiting for the bell foundry team to come and fit a new runner board on the 3rd bell which will be an opportunity to meet their team and plan ahead for their next quinquennial inspection.

Our Tower Keepers have been passing on their records since at least 1964 recording everything from new ropes and their lengths to major work such as the installation of the additional 6th bell in 1997. We even have details of the adjustments to the height of trap doors to allow sound into the ringing room. There are records of tightening clappers, greasing moving parts, repairing ropes right through to details of the muffles, (used to change the sound of the bells for Remembrance Sunday and other solemn occasions).

We think of our bells with much sentiment, they represent our history and a cultural tradition. Many of you will know Kathryn as a church goer and for her there is great importance in our calling people to prayer. Kathryn is the next link in the chain of generations of Tower Keepers who have looked after our bells, and she'll be looking after them for the years to come. In an ever changing, challenging world, there is much to be said for the stability of our Church and, our bells are really important to us. Kathryn asks,

"What else in Solihull will be unchanging in the coming decades?"

For her being our, indeed your, Tower Keeper is an enormous privilege.

The pictures show Kathryn in the pit of the 4th bell greasing the clapper instructed by Mike and finishing an adjustment of the rope on the tenor (our largest bell).

Sand Cooper

Could You Become a Rising Stars Patron?

For the last academic year, Chris and Liam have led the *Rising Stars Choral Outreach Project* working very successfully with four local junior schools: TGPA Yew Tree, Sharmans Cross, Widney and Oak Cottage. Through running after-school choirs, they have reached nearly 100 children the parish may not ordinarily be in close contact with. Each term they have worked towards an end-of-term concert: a *Festival of Carols* in December, a performance of *Captain Noah and his Floating Zoo* before Easter, and an *All Stars Concert* in July. Two of the concerts took place in St. Alphege Church, bringing many families into church for the first time. Four children have joined our church choir already, and we hope others will follow. All three concerts were well attended by parents and school staff.

In order to continue the project into its second year, we need additional funding support. For the past year, we were supported through a £6,000 *Church Choir Award*, a joint initiative between the *Cathedral Music Trust* and the *Royal School of Church Music*, which we're not able to access for a second year. *Arts Council England* have been very encouraging about the project but are unfortunately not able to fund it during this funding round.

We are therefore asking readers of the Parish News whether they or their business or organisation might be in a position to help fund the project for the coming year. We already have five junior schools signed up, TGPA Yew Tree, Chilcote, Sharmans Cross and Oak Cottage, and we believe firmly in the benefits of fostering a culture of singing in schools, based on the evidence that music lessons, particularly singing, raise the academic achievement and emotional wellbeing of pupils.

We are looking for £6,000 to fund the project at the past year's level (after-school choirs and singing assemblies in four schools), and £23,000 to extend to six schools and add weekly classroom singing lessons in each school.

Patrons would benefit from publicity on all communications with schools and parents throughout the year, acknowledgement on concert programmes, access to pre-concert VIP receptions, as well as knowing that they have supported a successful and proven outreach programme to promote the emotional development of our local young people and to grow their links with the church.

Please contact Chris by email or phone if you, or anyone you can recommend, might be pleased to help us in any way. email c.thomas@solihullparish.org.uk or telephone 07950 583459.

We hope that you will share this vision and will be able to play a part in enabling the project to continue to flourish in future years.



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Let us Pray

Calendar and Prayer Intentions for October 2024

1	Remigius, Bishop of Rheims	Parishes in Vacancy	Merrington Close
2	Feria	Our Members of Parliament	Miall Park Road
3	George Bell, Bishop of Chichester	The Sick and Those in Need of Healing	Middlewood Close
4	St. Francis of Assisi	Animal Charities	Milcote Road
5	Feria	Businesses in Solihull	Mill Lane
6	Nineteenth Sunday After Trinity	The Parish	Mirfield Road
7	Feria	Members of the Government	Moat Lane
8	Feria	Solihull Borough Council	Monastery Drive
9	Denys, Bishop of Paris	The Diocese of Gibraltar in Europe	Monkspath Hall Road
10	Paulinus, Bishop of York	Stephen, Archbishop of York	Muswell Close
11	Ethelburga, Abbess of Barking	Guli, Bishop of Chelmsford	Naseby Road
12	Wilfred of Ripon, Bishop	Farmers and Agricultural Workers	Netherwood Close
13	Twentieth Sunday After Trinity	A Good Harvest	Newfield Close
14	Feria	Those who are seeking employment	New Road
15	Teresa of Avila	Growth of Religious Life	Northwick Crescent
16	Nicholas Ridley, Hugh Latimer, Reformation Martyrs	People Persecuted For Their Faith Today	Oaken Drive
17	Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, Martyr	The King and Queen	Oakland Close
18	St. Luke, Evangelist and Physician	Health Care Workers	Oakley Wood Drive
19	Henry Martyn, Translator of Scriptures, Missionary	Translators of the Bible	Oakwood Croft
20	Twenty-first Sunday After Trinity	The Parish	Oldington Grove
21	Feria	Bishop Michael	Oldway Drive
22	Feria	Solihull Hospital	Orchard Avenue
23	Feria	Victims of Stabbing and Other Assaults	Park Avenue
24	Feria	Phelim, Archdeacon of Aston	Park Road
25	Crispin and Crispinian, Martyrs	Our Community Police Officers	Perryford Drive
26	Alfred the Great, King West Saxons	Rev'd. Tony Rindl, Our Area Dean	Pinfold Road
27	Last Sunday After Trinity	Those Who Produce and Publish Bibles	Pinley Way
28	SS. Simon and Jude, Apostles	Members of the PCC	Pool Meadow Close
29	James Hannington, Martyr Uganda	The Diocesan Links with Malawi	Poolfield Drive
30	Feria	Marie Curie Hospice, Solihull	Poplar Road
31	Martin Luther, Reformer	Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury	Poplar Way

The Church prays for the community daily: please include these topics in your personal daily prayers.

From the St. Alphege Register

Baptisms

7 th July	Theodore Brookbanks
18 th August	Abhinav Abrol
1 st September	Nancy Doherty
1 st September	Edith Carrington

Weddings

21 st September	Thomas John Holdworth and Sophie Laura Cahalin
21 st September	Alexander Graeme Thompson and Laura Stanion

Memorial Service

23 rd September	John Goodman
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Names taken from the Chantry Book for Remembrance in October

Nicola Blakeman	Carl Hampson	John Daniel Mee
Peter Brotherton	Ian Herd	John Roberts
Christopher Robin Collette	Ruth Humphrey	Pat Shackleton
Margaret Fenwick	Frank Leach	Michael Simcock
Mabel Griffiths	Muriel Leach	

Wednesday Lunchtime Music Recitals, 1.10pm to 2pm

Everyone is welcome to the Recitals. Admission is free and there is a retiring collection held in aid of The Friends of St. Alphege Music (Registered Charity 511237). Refreshments are available from 12.30 p.m.

2 nd October	Frank Stubbs and Simon Palmer, trumpet and organ
9 th October	Adam Parrish, piano
16 th October	Pupils from Solihull School
23 rd October	Harry Brown, organ
30 th October	Choristers of St. Alphege Church

Worship Notes for October 2024

The long season of Trinity, which began late in May, comes to its end this month. As we settle into Autumn, we give thanks for the harvest and for all of God's gifts to us. There are some special days to remember in October.

4th October: St. Francis of Assisi

Francis was born into a wealthy family from central Italy around the year 1181. Whilst at prayer he heard the distinct instruction to go and repair the church which he could see was falling down. As others began to join him, he formulated a simple gospel-based rule of life. From this grew the world-wide Franciscan Order of Monks and Nuns.

10th October: Paulinus of York

Born in the latter part of the sixth century, probably in Italy, Paulinus was among a group of monks sent by Pope Gregory to assist Augustine in England. Paulinus built the first church in York and became its first bishop. He subsequently built a number of churches in the north of England, but following the death of King Edwin, he had to flee for his life. He later became Bishop of Rochester.

11th October: Ethelburga, Abbess of Barking

Ethelburga accompanied Paulinus to Northumbria where she married King Edwin, who took his wife's faith. She was also the sister of Erkenwald, Bishop of London. Following the death of Edwin, she founded the joint abbey at Barking, in Essex. This was a large monastery, the ruins of which are visible today.

18th October: St. Luke

Luke was a friend of the apostle St. Paul and is mentioned by him several times in his letters. Paul describes Luke as 'the beloved physician'. He is believed to be the author of both the gospel which bears his name and the Acts of the Apostles. His narrative of the life of Christ has a pictorial quality which gives a clear sequential account of the Jesus' life from his nativity to his death and resurrection. Luke makes clear that the good news of salvation is for all, regardless of gender, social position or nationality.

28th October: Simon and Jude, Apostles

Simon and Jude are among the twelve apostles named in the Gospels. Simon is called the Zealot, probably because of his association with a nationalist party opposed to the Roman occupation. Jude is described as either the brother of James or the son of James. Both may be true. The similarity of his name to that of Judas (Iscariot) has meant that Jude is rarely invoked in prayer and interceding through him was seen as a final resort when all else had failed. For this reason, he is often known as the patron saint of lost causes.

Fr. Roy



Ring out Wild Bells

Saturday November 16th 2024
Shirley Methodist Church, 3:00pm

**A choral matinée celebrating British Composers
and marking the 150th Birthday of Gustav Holst**

Programme includes: From The Bavarian Highlands - *Edward Elgar*
Give Unto The Lord - *Edward Elgar* • Lord Who Hast Made Us - *Gustav Holst*
Three Festival Choruses - *Gustav Holst* • Ring Out Wild Bells - *Percy Fletcher*

Conductor: Leon James • **Organ:** Angela Sones • **Piano:** Iain Jackson
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October 2024 Services

Wednesday 2nd October

St. Michael 10.00 a.m. Eucharist

Thursday 3rd October

St. Alphege 10.30 a.m. Eucharist

Sunday 6th October Trinity 19

St. Alphege 8.00 a.m. Said Eucharist

Oliver Bird Hall 9.15 a.m. The Junction

St. Helen 10.00 a.m. Holy Communion

St. Alphege 10.30 a.m. Sung Eucharist

St. Michael 10.30 a.m. Eucharist

St. Alphege 5.00 p.m. Evensong

Wednesday 9th October

St. Michael 10.00 a.m. Eucharist

Thursday 10th October

St. Alphege 10.30 a.m. Eucharist

Sunday 13th October Harvest Trinity 20

St. Alphege 8.00 a.m. Said Eucharist

St. Alphege 9.15 a.m. All Age Holy Communion

St. Helen 10.00 a.m. Holy Communion

St. Michael 10.30 a.m. Eucharist

St. Alphege 11.00 a.m. Choral Eucharist

St. Helen 4.00 p.m. Harvest Songs of Praise

St. Alphege 5.00 p.m. Evensong

Wednesday 16th October

St. Michael 10.00 a.m. Eucharist

Thursday 17th October

St. Alphege 10.30 a.m. Eucharist

Morning Prayer

Morning Prayer is ordinarily said each weekday, and all are very welcome.

Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays at St. Alphege at 9 a.m.

Tuesdays at St. Helen's at 9 a.m.

Wednesdays at St. Michael's Chapel at 9.30 a.m.

Parish

Sunday 20th October Trinity 21

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Said Eucharist
Oliver Bird Hall	9.15 a.m.	The Junction
St. Helen	10.00 a.m.	Morning Prayer
St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Sung Eucharist
St. Michael	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Evensong

Wednesday 23rd October

St. Michael	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
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Thursday 24th October

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
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Sunday 27th October – Bible Sunday Last after Trinity Sunday

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Said Eucharist
St. Helen	10.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Sung Eucharist
St. Michael	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Evening Prayer

Wednesday 30th October

St. Michael	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
-------------	------------	-----------

Thursday 31st October

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
-------------	------------	-----------

Friday 1st November – All Saints Day

St. Alphege	19:30:00	Eucharist / Taizé
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Live and streamed services are being held at St. Alphege's, St. Michael's and St. Helen's churches.

Details are inside the front cover of this magazine and on the Parish Website.

<https://www.solihullparish.org.uk>

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SHOE AID

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4m children, taking an average across the British Isles, this equates to 4 children out of a class of 30

Young adults unable to go for an interview due to lack of suitable shoes

Rough Sleepers without shoes, "Trench Foot" is now rife amongst these people

So Children s to Adult Shoes, Trainers to Formal wear, all are welcome

We had a splendid collection last year, when we collected in the Parish and the Rotary Club of Solihull, a fantastic total of over 200 sacks of shoes.

Can we beat this??

If you have any unwanted shoes in good condition,
please contact **Phil** on **07770 406870**
or let me know on **philcgodfrey@btinternet.com**

Please tell your friends and relations - Phil Godfrey



The Guardians of St Alphege Parish Church

This month we will be lunching at the **Drum & Monkey**, Dorridge, B93 8ND on **Thursday 10th October**. There was a delay in sending out the menu selection as they were on the point of changing the menu. If you have not already booked a place and would like to come, please do get in touch as there may still be places; we are limited to 24 people.

If you are reading this before **3rd October**, remember that is the **date of the A.G.M.** Do come if you can. It is at 7.00 p.m. in Room 1 of the O.B.H. All Guardians should have received their papers by now, either by email or post.

The floodlighting is now working and we must thank the '2nd Sunday Drinks & Nibbles Fund' for a donation of £500 towards the cost.

We have nothing else planned at the moment. After the A.G.M. there will be changes of personnel on both the Trustees and the Fundraising Committees and once they have their feet under the table, I'm sure more events will be arranged.

The Trustees
October 2024



Crafty People – We Need You!

We are planning to host a poppy installation at St. Alphege Church in Solihull for Remembrance Sunday 2024, and we need as many poppies as possible! (Knitted or crocheted.)

(Patterns are available if you need one.)

See **Ann Bockock** (Knit & Natter at the Greville Arms, fortnightly on Monday evenings) or **Suzette Maguire** (Wellbeing Wednesday at the Greville Arms, every Wednesday morning or call

0121 7090884 for more details.

Drop off points to be confirmed.



Floodlighting

The Guardians Floodlighting Scheme is available for anyone who would wish to celebrate or mark an occasion, or to commemorate a date.

Do contact me on the phone or email below if you don't know about the Floodlighting Scheme and would like to learn more. It's open to all.

The cost is £8.00 for 2 hours; £14.00 for 4 hours. Please give 21 days notice.

Forms are available from the Guardians notice boards in St. Alphege Church or in the Oliver Bird Hall.

Names are displayed on monthly lists on these notice boards and also in the Solihull Parish News magazine and acknowledged with a card sent to the donor.

For further information please contact the Scheme organiser:-

Sheila Payne, 0121 706 0520; or email: russellpayne110@aol.com

The Church was floodlit to remember the following in 2024

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 6 th September | In loving memory of Peggy Oswald. |
| 7 th September | In loving memory of Jean McDonough on her birthday. |
| 10 th September | In loving memory of Edward (Ted) Corbridge, beloved husband of Wendy. |
| 12 th September | Ian Stanley Temple Senior. 9/1/38 -24/7/24.
A wonderful friend and soul mate for 32 years.
We said our farewell on 12 th September 2024. Ann x |
| 16 th September | In loving memory of Neil John McDonough. |
| 18 th September | The birthday of Margaret Oswald. |
| 18 th September | Noreen Porter on the anniversary of her death.
Treasured memories of a dear wife, mother and grandmother.
David and family. |
| 21 st September | The anniversary of the death of Laura Patricia Clark. |
| 22 nd September | In loving memory of Susan Hewitt. |
| 23 rd September | In loving memory of Rebecca Davies. |
| 23 rd September | The church will be floodlit on September 23 rd in celebration of the life of John Goodman who will be so greatly missed. |
| 25 th September | The 53 rd wedding anniversary of the marriage of Chrissie and the late dearly loved Robert Lamble. |
| 28 th September | To commemorate the birthday of the late Canon Harry Hartley. |

Music Matters

Rochester Cathedral Summer Residency

On the hottest day of this year, an intrepid group of choristers set off in a minibus without air conditioning to travel down to Rochester to spend a week in residence at the cathedral. Although the weather was far too hot for travelling, the fine weather for the rest of the week was a real blessing, making for enjoyable outdoor free time, and also leading us to really appreciate the cool interior of the cathedral.

We sang services every day except for Wednesday, which was the cathedral's quiet day, when we went to visit the beach at Minnis Bay. The beach day involved the usual favourite activities of swimming in the sea, playing boules, some very complex digging in the sand, and of course ice creams, all enjoyed by choir members of varying ages! Another day, we visited Rochester Castle, which gives amazing views of the cathedral, and was also the venue for Rochester Pride on the Saturday of our visit.

Everyone of course loves the free time activities where great



long-lasting friendships are formed, but the main focus of the week is the singing. Most days include a routine of singing, medal training, rehearsals in the cathedral and singing a service of choral evensong. The younger choristers improve in leaps and bounds during the week, benefiting from time with their older peers and having lots of rehearsal and learning opportunities.

The music ranged from Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625) to Philip Stopford (b.1977), and the even younger Liam Condon, our very own Assistant Organist, who composed the Responses which were sung at the Men's Voices evensong. There were also choral favourites by Howells, Wesley and Stanford –

plenty of high-level repertoire sung to the very best of our abilities.

Liam, Harry (our Senior Organ Scholar) and Josh (our Junior Organ Scholar) all enjoyed playing the cathedral's organ, and also a chamber organ currently being stored for composer Thomas Hewitt-Jones – what a privilege to play these prestigious instruments.





We are hugely grateful to all who make cathedral weeks such a success. It was a real pleasure to have Fr. Nick and Helen with us for part of the week, for Nick to join in with singing in the choir, and to have their company and support. The fact they brought their dog, Mabel, who was extremely popular with the choristers, was an added bonus!

In addition, we extend our thanks to all choir members, all parents, and Pam and Alison, for their tremendous support throughout the week.

The last words, however, must go to a member of the Rochester Cathedral congregation, who remembered our previous visit:

Thank you for the services at Rochester Cathedral over the last week, sung so wonderfully by your choir and accompanied so ably by your organist - whose superb voluntaries provided an additional treat. I can only imagine the amount of hard work, practice and organisation that must have gone in to making the week such a success.

As a regular worshipper at the cathedral for some years, I remember well the visit in 2017 and had been hoping that St Alphege would return one day so this was a wish fulfilled!

It is such a pleasure to know that the choir's hard work was appreciated, and that we were able to enhance the worshipping life of the cathedral community during the summer.

Isabel Baumber

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Contact us to RSVP.

*As rated by the Care Quality Commission in England and the Care Inspectorate in Scotland.



CHURCH 4 FAMILIES

October

Sunday Worship

St Alphege

(More details overleaf!)

On **6th and 20th October** the Junction will meet **IN PERSON** at 9.15am in the Oliver Bird Hall.

(An informal service for families of all ages. It's lively and laid back!)

On **27th October** the Junction will join with St Helen's Sunday club at St Helen's church at 10am to celebrate Bible Sunday

On **13th October** everyone will meet in the church building at 9.15am for a **Harvest thanksgiving service** for all ages.

St Helen

Every Sunday at 10.00 am there is worship in a modern space with a community feel with activities available for children.

On **27th October** St Helen's Sunday club will meet during the 10am service with an exciting action packed session for children age 0-11.

St Michael

Every Sunday in term time at 10.30am there is worship in the school hall where a warm and welcoming space is created for all ages to worship.

Other Activities

Friday 18th October **Messy Church** St Helen's Church 4-6pm

Praise and Play Every Friday 9.30-10.30am Oliver Bird Hall

There's lots happening in the Parish on Sundays in October!

In the St Alphege church building at 9.15am on 13th October there will be a very special **Harvest All age service**. There will be a collection of non perishable items to be shared with local charities.

Here are the themes for the Junction in October:

6 Oct **God's Wonderful World** - We'll be thinking about our natural world and especially the animals and birds. What are your favourites and how can we care for our world? **We're hoping that the Solihull Parish puppet team will be joining us!**

20 Oct **Who is the most important?**- We'll be finding out what Jesus thought about that question. Everyone will get the chance to make a medal to take home to celebrate being part of Jesus' community.

27 Oct **Bible Sunday** - Today is the day when we thank God for the Bibles that have carried his good news through the ages and around the world and we will be joining with St Helen's Sunday club. **Bring along a Bible or Bible story book and tell us why it's special to you.**



**ST HELEN'S SUNDAY
CLUB**

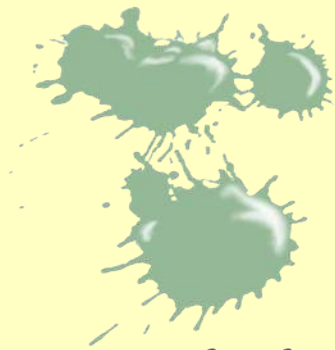


Join us at St Helen's Church, St Helen's Road, B91 2DA (off Buryfield Road) at 10am on the 4th Sunday of each month for an exciting action packed session for children age 0-11.

Next session Sunday 27th October 2024

Don't miss it!

For more information contact Linda Hicks
l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk



Activities for families of all shapes and sizes with lots of hands-on, crafty fun - followed by a celebration including a story and a prayer. Finally we'll finish with a tasty hot tea for everyone!

WHEN?

4pm until 6pm on Friday 18th October, 15th November and 20th December

WHERE?

St Helen's Church, St Helen's Road, B91 2DA (off Buryfield Road)

WHO?

EVERYONE! Children, bring your friends, but be sure to bring an adult

Cost: £2 per person, max £7 per family



Booking is essential. E mail l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk to book your place.





Prams to Preschool -



Praise and Play

Every Friday in the main Hall of the Oliver Bird Hall
9.30 a.m.-10.30 a.m.

Come along and chat, play, eat biscuits, sing action
songs, explore a bible story.

A time of fun and fellowship for all.



If you want to know more ring Linda on
0121 270 7390
or 07838 670772

or e mail l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk

Youth Stuff

The Youth Group continues to meet on a Friday evening in the Oliver Ball Hall. Are you or is someone you know in Year 6 and above interested in joining a church youth group? Then do consider joining Solihull Parish Youth on a Friday evening, 5p.m. – 6.20 p.m. in Room 6 at the Oliver Bird Hall. The sessions include pizza, activities and games. The aim is to provide a safe space to have fun and where faith and friendships can grow. There is no charge, but registering before you come along for the first time is essential. Please email Lynn Smart for the registration link: l.smart@solihullparish.org.uk



St Alphege
All Age Eucharist
9.15 a.m. Sunday 13th October

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We have been pleased at St. Helen's to resume most of our regular activities after the Summer break.

We were very sorry at the beginning of September to have to say good-bye to Sheila Cross, who died in the Marie Curie Hospice, where she had been a regular member of staff herself. Sheila was a faithful member of St. Helen's for many years and will be greatly missed by many of us. She was always ready with practical help of all kinds whether nursing advice or lifts in the car. She was a passionate gardener, and I cannot be the only one to treasure one of her cactus gardens. She was also an excellent cook and produced cakes, jam and marmalade for endless sales and bazaars. St. Helen's was packed for her funeral with people from many organisations and parts of the world – a fitting tribute to a great Christian lady.

Lydia and Homegroup

These groups have been held every other Monday afternoon and evening to follow a study course, using video and discussion, of St. Paul's letter to the Romans. This has proved challenging but rewarding and we look forward to completing the rest of the course. We do also enjoy the occasional social evening with a meal when there is an extra Monday evening in the month.

Cameo

Cameo is a very friendly group which has been meeting for many years in the afternoon on the first Wednesday of the month. Its name stands for *'Come And Meet Each Other'* and is popular with our neighbours as well as church members. There is usually a speaker on a variety of topics and plenty of time for refreshments and chat afterwards. The speaker this month gave us lively and thought-provoking reflections on his 20 years of military service.

Harvest Songs of Praise

This popular service will be held on the 13th October at 4 p.m. and we will be delighted to be joined by a number of our neighbours as well as the musicians from St. Michael's. Three of our members will give the story of their Christian faith and choose a favourite hymn. There will be plenty of cake and tea as well.

Harvest Barn Dance

This will be held on Saturday 19th October in support of Mutanda Island Medical Centre, near to Potters Village in Uganda with which we have had close links for some time. Some of our barn dancing may be a little rusty, but we will try! Hopefully the fish and chips will be as excellent as ever. Please bring your own drinks

Shoe Aid

Phil Godfrey recently handed over more than 350 black bags full of all kinds of shoes to the charity Shoe Aid, which have been very gratefully received and we are still collecting.

Wednesday lunches

These lunches resumed and are enjoyed for the company as much as for the delicious food. Many of the members are reliant on a lift to attend and we are very grateful to our regular band of regular drivers. We are always looking for more so that we can invite more lonely people.

Judith Arrowsmith



St Helen's Christmas Fayre



Sat 30th Nov 2024
11.00am - 2.00pm

Wood turning	Cakes/Preserves
Books	Bottle Tombola
Toys & Games.	Treasure Hunt
Raffle.	Cards & Decorations
Crafts	Human Fruit Machine



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Celebration

Our September social afternoon coincided with the Diamond Wedding anniversary of Diana and Richard Austen. It was lovely to share this special occasion. They brought with them their congratulations card received from King Charles and Queen Camilla and also their own wedding photos, which elicited much reminiscing from those present. Diana and Richard are long-standing members of St. Michael's. Richard served as Warden at one time and was also on the D.C.C. and was involved with the conversion of Oak Cottage in the 1990s. Diana has also done a variety of jobs including sending cards on behalf of St. Michael's for special events which is greatly appreciated by everyone. Our next social afternoon is on 3rd October from 2 p.m. until 4 p.m. in St. Michael's Chapel.



Wanderings

In August St. Michael's becomes itinerant, some joining St. Helen's and others taking the opportunity to visit other churches, though we all look forward to our return to St. Michaels at the beginning of September. The St. Michael's musicians led the music at St. Helen's for one of the services. We thank St. Helen's for the warm welcome we received during our time with them.

Happenings

Recently one of our church members, Bruce Hart, went going on an organised cycle ride in the Netherlands in July, doing a circular route of around 275 miles over the space of a week (with 2 days rest in-between). He raised funds for the Trussell Trust, which provides emergency food banks and support for people facing hardship. Well done, Bruce!

St. Michael's continues to have a *Helping Hands* food collection each month and also the donations from coffee after the Wednesday service are given to *Helping Hands*.

At the time of writing, we are looking forward to the end of September when we will host a **Macmillan Coffee Morning**. This is on Friday 27th September in St. Michael's Chapel from 10 a.m. until 12 noon. Our patronal festival is on Sunday 29th at 10.30 a.m. in Sharmans Cross School. We celebrate *Harvest* on Sunday 13th October.

Paul and Jennifer Smith

Harvest *Barn Dance*

Saturday 19th October 2024, 7.00pm - 10.00pm

St Helen's Church

in support of Mutanda Island Medical Centre

near to Potters Village Medical Centre



School on Mutanda Island

Tickets £20 (includes fish and chip supper) available from Phil Godfrey 07770 406 870

Please buy your tickets early, in order that Phil can order the food, in advance.

“How long does it take for a pineapple to grow?” What we can re-learn from those outside of the Church

Food 4 Thought @ Breakfast & Chat currently meets every two weeks at the Greville Arms. Predominantly aimed at non-churchgoers, our discussion is usually based around a one-word topic and recent discussions having included mindfulness, wisdom, understanding, and hope.

At one recent discussion we experienced a ‘body prayer’. During this prayer our focus was on a piece of fruit that we had chosen at random from a selection provided. When it got to the part where we were to ‘appreciate’ what was in front of us, I then provided what I thought was a comprehensive list of questions of what people might ask. I.e. Where was this from? Who planted it? How many people were on the long list of those who had dealt with it from planting to harvesting to transporting – to selling? I had had experience of this body prayer and thought that I had provided near enough every permutation of questioning. But I was wrong. The question was posed, by a non-churchgoing member of the group, “*How long does it take for a pineapple to grow?*”, and I knew immediately that God was in the asking. 😊

Things we may have lost

Jesus taught that for us to enter God’s kingdom, we must become like children.

Once, when the disciples were arguing about who was the greatest: *“He called a little child to him and placed the child among them. And he said: **“Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”*** (Matthew 18:2-4)

Small children are totally dependent on their parents. And true faith in God is a childlike faith—we trust him and love him like a child toward their mother.

Children who love their parents also want to please them. Likewise, if we love God (which requires faith), we will naturally want to please him. That’s why it’s also impossible to *please* God without faith: *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.* (Hebrews 11:5-6)

Finally, and most importantly here, children like to ask A LOT of questions! (*Trust me, my nursery nurse background, plus my two stepchildren, 7 grandchildren and 6 Godchildren are all testament to this!* 😊) And do you know what? There is no such thing as a daft question.

Some years ago, quite early in my faith journey, a bunch of us new Christians at our church wanted to ask questions but we felt that we were met constantly with looks of disapproval from those in the congregation who already knew it all. (*Did they?*) Anyway, working with the vicar we set up with him a group called 'Absolute Beginners', where we could ask away and not feel judged. Not long into the running of this group, the vicar commented that of course we weren't 'absolute beginners', that is, we knew more than we realised. It was then confession time! The name of the group began out of our need to be able to ask our questions in a safe space – and that safe space came out of the fact that we gambled that the people who we felt frowned on us for asking questions wouldn't be seen dead at a group called Absolute Beginners. And we were right! ☺

Food 4 Thought at Breakfast & Chat is one of the highlights for me of my ministry at the moment. Those coming along get to ask the questions that they have – not necessarily the questions that we *think* they might have or *should* have – and not just about pineapples. About our lived experience of things and what the Christian faith has to say about it. We all get to ask our questions, to learn together and from each other.

How long does it take for a pineapple to grow? I didn't know, but I do now. Go look it up. And think about, what question or questions would you like answers to? And where and/or when can you ask them?

Think and pray – Prayer for Childlike Faith

Heavenly Father,

Jesus Himself teaches us, "*Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*"

To that end, help us we pray, to trust you unconditionally.

To avoid over-thinking and to embrace simplicity with a heart full of faith.

To cultivate a sense of curiosity and a desire to learn and grow in our faith.

To seek guidance, navigating adult issues with faith and humility.

And to embrace vulnerability, maintaining an open and humble heart,
allowing you to work through our weaknesses.

This we ask in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,

Amen.

Keep safe and thanks for listening!

Suzette.

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Solihull Parish: St. Alphege Parish Church

In the June edition of Parish News the rationale behind Project Turnaround was explained. Phase 1, the renewal of the St. Alphege Church lighting, is now complete. The P.C.C. have unanimously agreed to seek the necessary approvals for the next phase of Project Turnaround, including a reordering of the church with a new, external, west-end entrance and associated landscaping. Our church architect, Aidan Ridyard, described the plans to the congregation at the end of September. The detailed plans are now on display at the back of St Alphege Church. Everyone is encouraged to give feedback. What do you like, and is there anything you are less keen on? Please email turnaround@solihullparish.org.uk



To address the basic expectations of a welcoming, comfortable and hospitable environment, these are the specific proposals that Solihull P.C.C. has agreed, to bring the St. Alphege Church building up to standard to support 21st century mission.

1. Welcome, Hospitality and Accessibility

- a. Change the "welcome" entrance to the west door, facing the Touchwood Shopping Centre and linking closer to the Parish Centre, whilst retaining both north and west entrances for safety reasons. Build a new, external west end entrance lobby ("narthex").
- b. Create new secure glazed entrances to enable the ancient doors and gates to be left open at all times so that the passer-by can glimpse into the light of the sacred space.
- c. Ensure both entrances have uninterrupted level access from pathways over the thresholds into church.
- d. Achieve level access throughout the main body of the church by eliminating the ridges between carpet, heating grills, paving and pew platforms.
- e. Create accessible access for Parish Centre users, and from a new drop-off bay in St. Alphege Close for funeral and wedding parties, across new ramps and paths directly to the west end of church.
- f. Create a welcome and hospitality area near to the west entrance as a first point of contact around which all information, books, cards and notices can be consolidated. New designs for the bookstall and welcome desk against the west wall are proposed to replace the mixed classical-Gothic Wardens' stalls installed in 1963. The Roll of Rectors would be rehung in St Katherine's Chapel.
- g. Provide a food and drink preparation area (servery and counter) with hot and cold running water and drainage in the south-west corner of the nave, moving the Children's Area to the north-west corner.
- h. Provide accessible visitor toilets, washing and baby changing facilities in the new narthex.

Project Turnaround Phase 2 October 2024

2. Warmth and Light from Low Carbon Energy

- a. Reduce the use of gas significantly in the immediate future by installing a lower temperature heating system, leading to eventual replacement of the gas boiler by heat pumps.
- b. The new lighting has improved the illumination in church enormously and is much cheaper to run. To brighten the nave further, we might consider restoring some lime-wash to the walls that was removed in 1856, which could also improve the church's poor acoustics.

3. Liturgical Reordering

- a. There is growing demand to provide more flexible spaces for worship and events which cannot be easily accommodated by the current nave fixed seating facing east.
 - i. Sunday Eucharists in the nave
 - ii. Sunday Evensong in the chancel
 - iii. Weekday Eucharists in a side chapel
 - iv. Weddings with a central visible space for bride & groom
 - v. Funerals with a central visible space for the coffin
 - vi. Baptisms in a circle around the font with plenty of space for buggies
 - vii. Breakout areas configured for age-appropriate teaching during services including a space for young children and their parents
 - viii. Infant & Junior school services with space for pupil presentations to staff and parents
 - ix. Bible study and prayer groups meeting in the round in quiet spaces
 - x. Church quiet days configured with various focal points around church for meditation – for example, around the Candlemas window
 - xi. Praise & Play, a weekly support network for families of pre-school children, comprises praise songs, Bible stories, drinks and chat in church
 - xii. The annual promenade events of "Journey to the Stable" and "Easter Journey" with various tableaux around the church
 - xiii. Stations of the Cross on the pillars of the church
 - xiv. The Parish Puppet Team perform during All Age services from a specially constructed booth which needs to be visible for the whole congregation
 - xv. Flower festivals with arrangements around the church pillars and alcoves
 - xvi. Concerts, and organ and instrumental recitals from a visible platform
 - xvii. Conferences, symposiums, exhibitions in a variety of seating configurations
- b. In order to provide:
 - i. uninterrupted level access in the nave
 - ii. suitable seating around the font at baptisms
 - iii. more circulation space for wheelchairs and buggies
 - iv. a lower temperature heating system
 - v. more flexible spaces for worship and events

Continued on next page

Project Turnaround *continued*

We propose to replace the nave pews, which date from 1879, and lay a level, paved floor with underfloor heating and durable chairs (Howe 40/4) which are light and easy to handle and stack up to 40 high. The capacity of the church will be unaltered by using chairs rather than pews, supplemented by fixed perimeter seating in the nave, part of which can incorporate the existing Mayoral pew ends and memorial pew inscriptions.

- c. Sunday Eucharists are currently celebrated in the nave from an altar under the western tower arch. The choir, seated in the chancel, is currently both acoustically and physically remote from the worshipping congregation, despite the best efforts of audio amplification. We want the choir to be a physical part of the worshipping congregation, whose music they lead, by re-positioning them behind the nave altar. This gives an opportunity to return the Servers' Stalls to the west ends of the chancel choir stalls, where they were before 1975, to create a more defined chancel worship space, like a Lady Chapel, for Evensong and other occasional services.
- d. The current nave altar is on castors, but heavy. To accommodate a new choir position behind a nave altar, we would like to commission a beautifully designed, simpler, smaller and undressed altar table, well forward of the western arch. The altar could be moved on occasions but would usually be kept in position as the focal point of the church. Matching lectern and choir stands would also be commissioned.
- e. As a result of moving the choir, and also to create a more flexible space at the head of the nave, we need to relocate:
 - i. the Jacobean pulpit, from around 1610 - now used infrequently. It was originally positioned against the first pillar of the nave on the south side, then against the south-west pier arch, and in 1963 was moved to its current position against the north-west pier arch. It is proposed to move the Jacobean parts of the pulpit to the east end of the south choir stalls.
 - ii. the eagle lectern, from 1884, which is too high without platform steps, and too heavy to move when needed to create flexible space. It is proposed to move the eagle lectern to the north side of the high altar sanctuary.
 - iii. the free-standing Rector's stall, dedicated to the memory of A. Edward Fraser, Rector 1935-53. It is proposed to remove the Rector's stall.
- f. Make much better use of the north transept by repurposing St. Katherine's Chapel, currently used for post-communion ablutions, as a vestry and meeting room with step-free access, a levelled floor and better-designed storage areas. The existing stalls and altar dating from the mid-20th century would be removed but the reredos and screens retained.

There is no firm proposal to implement these changes, although that is the desire. At this stage we want feedback from the congregations, the diocesan authorities and the local authority. A full professional assessment of the likely costs is underway. Later this year, the P.C.C. will consider whether to embark on fundraising for the whole of this phase of Project Turnaround or to split the works in smaller phases as funding allows. Potential works, if funding is available, could begin late in 2025 and into 2026.

Andy Halstead

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Update from the Parish Wardens

The highlight to the start of the new academic year is the new lighting at St. Alphege. This was switched on and inaugurated at St. Alphege Services of Light on 8th September; the lighting it is certainly amazing and shows off the features of the church so well. Particularly striking are the Crypt Chapel and the St Alphege Chapel (who had noticed before that this had a red ceiling?). As well as thanks to the contractors and our own staff and volunteers who have been involved with this, we also give great thanks to Andy Halstead and Philip Leach for the huge amount of work they have done to get the work done on time and so effectively. Proposals for further work with Project Turnaround will be shared using consultations with congregations from the end of September.

Can we take photos? Can we bring in the dog? Just two of many questions that were asked when St. Alphege took part in *Heritage Week* on 14th September. Many people came to look round, the tower tours were especially popular, and the new lighting really helped to show it off well. This is a forerunner to opening the church on weekdays from October. So many visitors said they had wanted to come in before but the doors were always locked. We have some volunteers to act as welcomers but we do need more – please do offer to help even if it is a few hours a month. Pam would love to hear from you. To volunteer for this, you do not need to attend St. Alphege or indeed any congregation; instructions will be given and note that we mean welcomers, not necessarily guides.

Harvest services are taking place in October – please do support these – which are advertised on the website and in Parish News and to the individual congregations. These include a *Harvest Bring & Share Lunch* at St. Alphege (with entertainment!), and an *Outdoor Service* and *Harvest Barn Dance* at St. Helen's.

We have now welcomed Tammy Strong as our new Children and Families' Worker and have interviewed to recruit a new Parish Administrator to replace Veronica; we hope to have good news on this soon.

We still do not yet have anyone to take on the roles of Parish Safeguarding Coordinator or the St. Alphege Safeguarding Coordinator on a permanent basis. Please do consider coming forward for either of these positions which are very important to the Parish. Group leaders have been asked to undertake their annual update of their lists of members and to ensure that all have completed the appropriate training. Please ask Pam, Sheila Sayers (St. Alphege), Jenny Carrington (St. Helen) or Nick Evans (St. Michael) if you need any help with this. Some people are under the misapprehension that Safeguarding Training is only applicable if you work or volunteer with children, but it includes vulnerable adults as well – exactly why training is needed!

We have a *Men's Breakfast* at the Greville Arms at 9 a.m. on Saturday 19th October. Our speaker will be John Butterworth who will talk about how his faith helped him through his 44-year career in journalism.

We need to mention the demonstrations that took place in Solihull following the killings of 3 children in Southport in July. One of the demonstrations was outside the Ramada Hotel and therefore outside St. Alphege church building with their signs being put across our signage. Thankfully it was not violent and people in the church were able to leave freely. We have reviewed our policies for St. Alphege and the Oliver Bird Hall in particular and will continue with this to ensure the safety of people using the buildings and of the buildings themselves.

The police have been very helpful and have kept a watch for us, and thankfully there have been no further incidents.

Two Working Groups are underway. The first on reviewing the way our District Churches operate and their responsibilities and freedoms to make decisions; the second on reviewing Worship in its broadest sense throughout our congregations. Proposals will be brought forward in due course.

The *Poppy Installation* for St. Alphege Church for *Remembrance* is really gathering pace. Thank you to all those who have made or are making poppies – apparently red wool is a scarcity in Solihull! - and we look forward to it being an important focus for our Remembrance considerations.

We still need volunteers for lots of positions within the Parish and we are planning showcases in our various congregations in the autumn. Would those running groups and activities, detail what vacancies you have, and everyone consider what you could offer.

**Pam Price
Andrew Williams
Parish Wardens**

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Matters of Faith

Let the Light Shine

What fun we had commissioning our new lighting system at our Sunday 'Services of Light' on 8th September – our own 'Son et Lumiere' (sound and light show) with dramatic music and lights in synchronised display.

Behind the fun was a serious message about Jesus the Light of the World: That we are called let our light shine, that is the reflected Light and Love of Christ, both in our church and in our lives. We were reminded that this light is a gift from God in creation – speaking of God's purity, power, and goodness; that this light reveals what is good and what is bad – both in our world and in ourselves; that this light therefore guides us along the right path; and finally, that this light is a warm welcoming light demonstrating God's grace and hospitality.

Sunday's services were well-attended with over 200 people in church, and it was particularly lovely to welcome guests, visitors, and members who had not been for some time. As we look to the future it is marvellous to know that every service and event will shine with God's light – and I encourage each of us to act as ambassadors, extending a warm invitation to family, friends, neighbours, and other acquaintances. There are certainly many special occasions between now and Christmas ideal for such an invitation where our lights will be seen in all their versatility and glory.



Another significant benefit of our new lights will be for when we are open to visitors – with a special setting designed to show off the church's beautiful architecture and historic points of interest. We aim for St. Alphege Church to be open from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. every weekday beginning from this month of October. Where possible this will be staffed by a team of hosts or welcomers which requires us to recruit a good many volunteers. No prior experience necessary, just a welcoming and friendly demeanour. Please do get in touch with Pam Price, Parish Warden, if you are able to help or would like to know more.

To return to the lights themselves, we are extraordinarily grateful to all those who completed the works – going above and beyond to ensure that disruption to key services and events was minimal. We greatly appreciate the volunteers from our own community who have helped to envision and oversee these works – and who continue to programme them for special occasions. We are, above all, grateful to the extraordinarily generous bequest from the late Diana Mitchell, given to the glory of God, which in large measure funded this transformation.

As different parts of the body of Christ, each one of us has been given particular gifts through which we may reflect the Love and Light of God. Individually and collectively may we live out our vocation to let this light shine.

Rev. Nick

A Civic Service to Remember: Honouring Tradition, Embracing the Future

It is with gratitude and emotion that I reflect on the recent Mayoral Civic Service. It was a truly remarkable event that wove together our rich traditions with the forward-looking spirit of our community. This service was more than just a celebration: it was a heartfelt expression of who we are as a borough and what we aspire to be.

I cannot begin to thank all those who were instrumental in bringing this service to life—from the dedicated staff at the Council to those at St. Alphege Church. Special thanks go to the Revd. Nick Parker, Priest in Charge of Solihull Parish, who officiated with grace, and the Revd. Paul Day, Vicar of Shirley and Mayor's Chaplain, whose powerful sermon resonated deeply with all present. Their leadership, coupled with the presence of everyone who attended, created a space that was not only ancient and sacred but also warm, welcoming, and inclusive.

The year 2024 holds a unique place in the heart of our borough, marking 70 years of the Mayoralty, 60 years since Solihull became a County Borough, and 50 years as a Metropolitan Borough. These milestones are not just dates on a calendar; they are chapters in the living history of Solihull, reminding us of our shared journey. As we honour the past, we also embrace the future, filled with opportunities and challenges that we will meet together.

In Solihull, tradition and modernity walk hand in hand, reflecting the values of inclusivity and progress that define us. What we create together today — through our collective actions, our shared spaces, and our commitment to one another — will shape the Solihull of tomorrow. It is our duty and our privilege to ensure that future generations inherit a borough that remains a beacon of warmth, welcome, and opportunity for all who reside here.

The service was elevated by an eclectic mix of music, including the anthem "*Locus iste*" in Latin performed by the St. Alphege Choir and a soul-stirring rendition of "*Ya Elahi*" by Mikael Mala in Arabic. The inclusion of verses by Qari Amr El Elaimy from the Quran and the verses of the Bible by the Revd. Sue Chandler were poignant reminders of our shared values of light, unity, and harmony.

As we look to the future, may this service inspire us to continue building a Solihull where tradition and modernity coexist, where inclusivity is not just a word but a lived experience, and where every individual feels valued and at home.

THIS IS OUR SOLIHULL — A PLACE OF BELONGING, A PLACE OF WELCOME, A PLACE FOR ALL.

**Councillor Shahin Ashraf, M.B.E.
Mayor of Solihull**

Addendum.

The poem *Don't Judge Me* published in the September 2024 edition of Parish News was written by Wendy Westley.



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For Your Diary



Thursday 3rd October : 1.30pm in the OBH. *Blood Bikes*. A talk by Martin Williams.

Thursday 17th October : 10.30am in church. *MU Corporate Eucharist*.

Thursday 7th November : 1.30pm in the OBH. *Ugandan Adventure*. A talk by Phil Godfrey.

Thursday 21st November : 10.30am in church. *MU Corporate Eucharist*.

You can access more information on www.solihullparish.org.uk/mothers-union and also from the website homepage top menu by clicking on **Connect** and then on **Mothers' Union**.

WIVES' FELLOWSHIP

The Fellowship Lunch Club will meet as usual on the first Friday of the month, Friday 4th October. If anyone would like to join the group for an enjoyable meal and friendly company, please telephone as below for further information.

Sadly, Stella Wright passed away on 31st August, shortly after her 90th birthday. She was a long-standing member of the Wives Fellowship and she and I ran the Fellowship together before Covid. Her financial advice was second to none and it would have been impossible to continue without her help. We shall miss her cheerful company. Her funeral will be at 1 p.m. at St. Alphege on Thursday 3rd October. May she rest in peace.

Carol Caldicott
0121 705 3168

The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily the views of *Solihull Parish News* or of *Solihull Parish*.

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SOLIHULL PARISH PCC & DCC CONTACTS

<i>Parish Wardens</i>	Andrew Williams, arwilliams399@gmail.com Pam Price, colandpam@ic24.net	0121 705 3268 0121 704 3104
<i>PCC Secretary</i>	Julia Hanson, pccsecretary@solihullparish.org.uk	
<i>Acting PCC Treasurer</i>	Tim Drakeford, 42 Fowgay Drive	0121 705 4494
<i>Parish Electoral Roll Officer</i>	Stephen Linstead, 20 Silhill Hall Road	0121 705 1376
<i>St Alphege Deputy Warden</i>	Sheila Sayers, 636 Streetsbrook Road	0121 705 5331
<i>St Alphege Stewardship Recorder</i>	Frank Upton, 1 Rectory Road	0121 705 2963
<i>St Helen Deputy Warden</i>	Chris Carrington	0121 705 0902
<i>St Helen Hall Bookings</i>	Jeremy Eade, solomere@aol.com	0121 706 3831
<i>St Michael Deputy Wardens</i>	Keith Wilson	0121 778 2295

SOLIHULL PARISH NEWS CONTACTS

<i>Editor</i>	Carol Southworth, parishnews@solihullparish.org.uk	0121 705 4958
<i>Production</i>	Roger Edwards, 39 Westfield Close, Dorridge, B93 8DY	01564 739134
<i>Treasurer</i>	Roger Giddings, 70 Silhill Hall Road	0121 686 3422
<i>Postal Subscriptions</i>	Helen Russell, 30 De Moram Grove, B92 0PZ	07710 473 418
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PARISH OFFICE	Sarah Markham Senior Administrator s.markham@solihullparish.org.uk Rekha Anand Parish Administrator admin@solihullparish.org.uk Parish Office, Oliver Bird Hall, Church Hill Road, Solihull, B91 3RQ	0121 705 5350
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SOLIHULL PARISH STAFF & CONTACTS

Priest in Charge, Rector Designate	The Revd. Nick Parker	rector@solihullparish.org.uk 07890 720240
Team Vicar for St. Michael (Not available Thursdays)	The Revd. Simon Marshall St Michael's Church Centre, Oak Cottage, Bryanston Road, Solihull, B91 1BS	simon@solihullparish.org.uk 0121 704 4730
Team Vicar for St. Helen	The position is currently vacant	sthoffice@solihullparish.org.uk
Pioneer Minister (Not available Thursdays)	Suzette Maguire 10 Middlewood Close, Solihull, B91 2TY	s.maguire@solihullparish.org.uk 0121 709 0884
Associate Priest	The Revd. Sue Chandler	s.chandler@solihullparish.org.uk 07970 791288
Readers	Linda Hicks Stephen Linstead Chris Carrington Paul Smith	01564 782557 0121 705 1376 0121 705 0902 07887 663 171
Assistance is also offered by	The Revd. Roger Chamberlain The Revd. Roy Murray The Revd. Canon Andrew Hutchinson The Venerable Paul Taylor The Revd. Anne Haselhurst	revrog@hotmail.co.uk fatherroy47@gmail.com 0121 296 7798 fr.andrewhutchinson@btinternet.com 0121 758 7877 ptaylor53@gmail.com 07796 691203 annehaselhurst@talktalk.net
Director of Music & Organist	Christopher Martin Thomas	c.thomas@solihullparish.org.uk
Assistant Organist	Liam Condon	l.condon@solihullparish.org.uk
Music Department Administrator	Isabel Baumber	isabel@solihullparish.org.uk
Director of Children's & Families' Ministry	Linda Hicks Room 3, Oliver Bird Hall, Church Hill Road, Solihull, B91 3RQ. Tammy Strong Assistant Children's Worker	l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk 07838 670772 0121 270 7390
Youth Assistant	Lynn Smart Youth Office, Oliver Bird Hall, Church Hill Road, Solihull, B91 3RQ	l.smart@solihullparish.org.uk 0121 661 6303
St Alphege Verger	Paul Evans Verger's Office at St Alphege Church	07443 917726
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