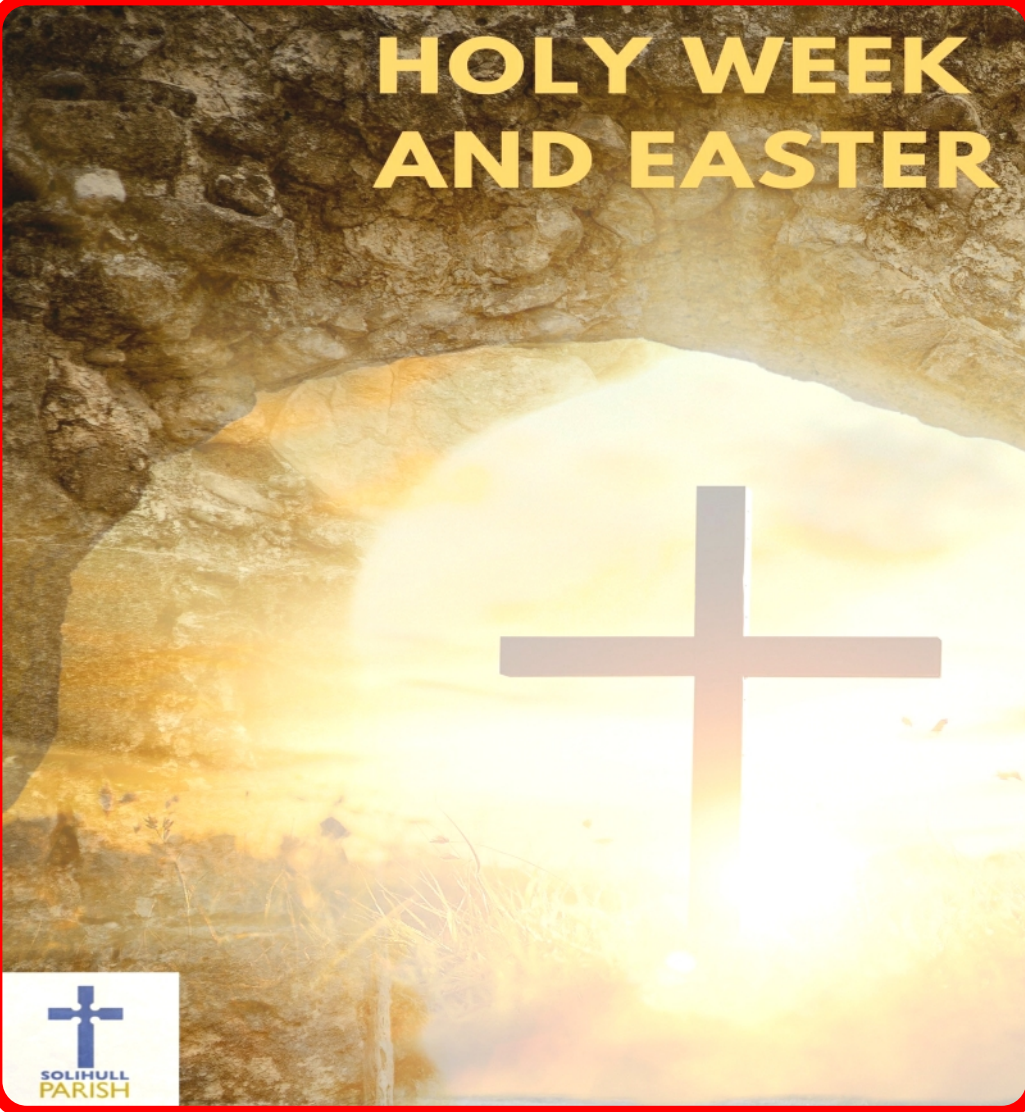


SOLIHULL
PARISH  **NEWS**

HOLY WEEK
AND EASTER



TEAM CHURCHES

St ALPHEGE -

The Square, Solihull B91 3RH

St HELEN -

St Helen's Road, Solihull B91 2DA

St MICHAEL'S CHAPEL -

Bryanston Road, Solihull B91 1BS

Sunday Worship at Sharman's Cross School,
Sharman's Cross Road, Solihull B91 1PH



St Alphege (Sundays)

8.00 a.m.	Said Eucharist	
10.30 a.m.	Sung Eucharist except:	
Sunday	9.15 a.m.	All Age Eucharist in the church 20 th April
	10.30 a.m.	Choral Eucharist 6 th and 27 th April
	10.30 a.m.	Sung Eucharist - St. George's Day Parade Service in the St. Alphege Church building on Sunday 27 th April
	11.00 a.m.	Choral Eucharist on 20 th April, Easter Day
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 the Oliver Bird Hall Sunday 6th and 13th April

St Helen

Sundays	10.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
Third Sunday	10.00 a.m.	Morning Praise
Tuesdays	9.00 a.m.	Morning Prayer

St Michael, Sharman's Cross School

Sundays 10.30 a.m. Eucharist.

St. Michael's Chapel

Wednesdays	9.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
Wednesdays	10.00 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

WEDDING AND BAPTISM ENQUIRIES

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

The Revd. Nick Parker
The Revd. Simon Marshall

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THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Visit our Website

www.solihullparish.org.uk

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parishnews@solihullparish.org.uk

Cover picture

"Holy Week and Easter"

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Editorial

Slowly, and despite some setbacks, winter turns into spring. Plants and animals, sensing the longer days, waken from their slumbers and emerge in a panoply of pleasing colours. Life is abundant. How often must our ancestors throughout the ages like us have welcomed the disappearance of the snows and the promise of fertile months to come.

Easter is a springtime festival. The first Good Friday and Easter Day fell at this time of year even if we can't be sure of the precise dates. And the Christian Church in its earliest days crowned existing spring traditions with the remembrance of Christ's suffering followed by a celebration of his resurrection on Easter Day.

Eastertide indeed brings us hope. Yet in these present times the flame of hope may seem to struggle against the wind of humanity's wickedness. Armed conflicts rage throughout the world. Nations and people are threatened with loss of freedom, land and identity. The siren voices of those who reject the whole concept of climate change or who are indifferent to its impact on the planet seek to drown the voice of reason and compassion. Assumptions about political and military loyalties suddenly seem to be in question.

In such troubled times, it is important to avoid panic and despair. As Our Lord said to his questioning disciples on Ascension Day, *'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.'* However much we may hope or fear, however much we may speculate, the future remains full of surprises. Nor should we make too much of our present troubles. The history of humanity includes much suffering, whether through our own fault due to war or injustice or to natural events. But recovery usually comes eventually, if often slowly and painfully. Periodically we conclude that such problems can be eradicated and that we are on an unstoppable road to progress. The most recent of such periods of self-delusion arose with the end of the Cold War when there was talk of 'the End of History.' But such talk is the stuff of human pride which sooner or later suffers a rude awakening.

Despite our present troubles, which are undeniably serious, this Easter still brings a powerful message of hope. And this message is for the ages not just for our mortal lifetimes. It tells us that humanity has a fatal flaw which is sin. That sin is essentially rebellion against our Creator. We believe that we can conduct our own lives without God's intervention and guidance. But we are deluded. Disobedience to God soon turns into human suffering and on top of all our troubles, self-inflicted or otherwise, the certainty of physical death always lurks in the background.

At Eastertime we are reminded that the coming of Jesus into this world is God's answer to our plight. Although He is God's son, he has taken on our human form and experienced all the setbacks and struggles of ordinary human beings. At the end of His earthly life He has suffered a cruel death at the hands of sinful human beings. The Crucifixion is an utter condemnation of humanity. But the God of Christianity is loving not vengeful. His love for us is so great that He forgives us despite all our weakness and ingratitude. And the raising of Jesus tells us that whatever our failings and misfortunes, there is a power greater than anything in the universe which guards and guides us and will at the last bring us to life everlasting.

May the coming Eastertide once more bring us hope and happiness.

Stephen Linstead

The Grove Residential Home (Solihull)

48 LODGE LANE, SOLIHULL, B91 2AE

CQC AND SOLIHULL MBC REGISTERED

A comfortable 'home from home' residential home for older people, located near to the Hospital and centre of Solihull.

We offer Short term / Long term

**Enquiries to Miss Michelle Farrugia
Telephone No: 0121 705 3356**

SHEPHERDSON COURT DAY CENTRE

7 Damson Parkway, Solihull West Midlands B91 2PP

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR COMPANY OR RESPITE FOR A LOVED ONE?

SHEPS - offers respite for older people in a day care setting

- Mobility Friendly
- Motivation and Exercise
- Socializing
- Art Class
- Refreshments
- Activities and Mental Stimulation
- Nutritious Menu
- Entertainment
- Person Centre Care and Support
- Individual Needs e.g. Administer Medication

For further information contact Day Centre Manager on

0121 711 4266

daycentremanager@raynerhouse.co.uk

<http://www.raynerhouseandyewtrees.co.uk>

Roundabout

Parish of Solihull Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2025

Our Parish annual meeting will take place at **7.30 p.m. on Monday 28th April in the main hall at The Oliver Bird Hall**. Anyone who is registered on the Parish Electoral Roll is welcome to attend the meeting. As well as reporting on all aspects of Parish life from the past year, voting will take place to elect officers, members of the Deanery Synod and lay representatives (direct and from district churches) to the Parochial Church Council.

If you are interested in becoming involved with the PCC please contact Julia Hanson at pccsecretary@solihullparish.org.uk for further details.

Director of Children's and Families' Ministry

After many years of fruitful ministry, Linda Hicks will be retiring at the end of this academic year. We will share details about our plans for properly saying goodbye and thank you in due course. Please be assured of our determination for a smooth transition so that we can build upon the legacy of wonderful work that Linda has directed and personally undertaken.

Wednesday Lunchtime Music Recitals, 1.10pm to 2pm

All are welcome to the Recitals. Admission is free of charge and a retiring collection is held in aid of The Friends of St. Alphege Music (Registered Charity 511237).

Recitals are held weekly during term time and refreshments are available from 12.30 p.m.

Isabel Baumber

2 nd April	Nova Wind Quintet
9 th April	Alex Woodrow, organ
16 th April	To be confirmed
23 rd April	To be confirmed
30 th April	To be confirmed

St. Alphege Mothers' Union Parish Pancake Party

The Oliver Bird Hall was filled with fun, joy and merriment at our annual Parish Pancake Party. Families of all ages joined us for pancake races, tombola prizes, a pancake tea, cakes and wine.

The evening started with races for pre-schoolers but having little legs certainly doesn't mean slow running. It is obvious they are training for the 'big' races when they're older!



We had sixteen teams enter, made up of friends or families and the races were expertly refereed by our compère Andy Hodgkinson who kept everything moving swiftly.

After several rounds of extremely competitive running and tossing of pancakes, and dropping of pancakes, the exciting final was won by the most aptly named team **Flippin' Fast!!**

The pancake tea is always welcome halfway through the party – all the pancakes are

homemade by the members of Mothers' Union – we made over 180 pancakes and nearly ran out so more must be made next year.

Talking of next year, the Pancake Party will be on Saturday 7th February 2026. Come and join us and watch Flippin' Fast defend their title...or can you beat them?

A huge thank you to all of you that came to make this such an enjoyable and successful event for Mothers' Union.

Elaine Diskin
St. Alphege Mothers' Union

Solihull Parish Puppets

The puppets were delighted to be invited to take part in the All Age service on 9th March, helping to explain the Liturgy of the Sacrament. Ezra and Logos were joined by Ezra's friend, Mysterio this time. The offertory song was performed by the puppets, a very moving one called "Remember Me". If you missed the service, you can catch up on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/live/uhDffTD6EsE>. The song starts around 49.16 minutes in.



Ruth Sabbagh

"Mostly Monday Group" dates,**

April to June 2025 (including Lent)



** Formerly '4th Monday Group'; '**Mostly Monday Group**' is a Bible study group that meets monthly (at least) at the Greville Arms, Cornyx Lane.

*All dates are 1.45pm for a 2pm start at the Greville Arms, Cornyx Lane, **unless otherwise stated.***

N.B. Please let Suzette know before the day if you are coming along for the first time **or** are a regular and can't make it. Thank you.

Monday 7th April (Lent 5) *Jesus in the city*

Monday 14th April (Lent 6) *Jesus on the cross*

Monday 12th May

Monday 23rd June

Contact Suzette: s.maguire@solihullparish.org.uk

or 0121 7090884

Church & Churchyard Committee

The Committee has not met since before the Covid restrictions, but is due to reconvene on 13th March. Nevertheless, there has continued to be a range of maintenance and repair issues a few of which we have been able to undertake 'within house'. Some of the larger problems will have been evident to everyone, such as the repairs to the central heating piping in the north aisle, the broken stained glass window also in the north aisle and just above the leaking pipe, and recently the extensive pruning of the churchyard trees. These three items being by far the most expensive, but many other works have been achieved including:



- Repair and replacement of roof tiles following the gales, when old lead plates were found dating from the 18th Century
- Repair of several worn areas of carpet in the nave
- Repair of the trolley for the stack of chairs at the back of church
- Placing a ramp at the door from the chancel in to the choir vestry
- Replacing the lighting in the choir vestry with LED system
- Repairing and renovating lighting in the bell tower stairway
- Repairing the smoke alarm in the bell ringing room
- New electric sockets for the audio-visual controls

There are also some ongoing issues:

- Repair of the gate from New Road in to the churchyard
- Decoration of the crypt chapel
- Replacing damaged slabs in the footpath leading to the North door.

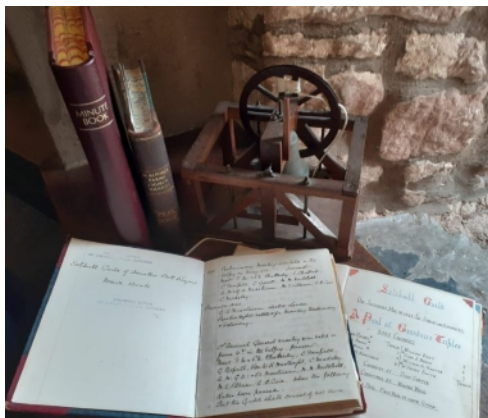
Over the next few months we will continue with the contract for the regular cutting of the grass, which will now be a bit easier following the tree pruning, and the four times per year churchyard tidy-up sessions, at which usually about 16-20 volunteers help to clear up the leaves and other debris.

David Sturdee
(For the Church & Churchyard Cttee)
11/03/2025

Hot off the Press! Ringers Update

Well, I'm no reporter but we thought this month we'd give you an update from our recent A.G.M. We have our own constitution for the St. Alphege Guild of Bell Ringers and many proud traditions. Meetings weren't always held annually when the Guild started back in 1891 but in more modern times, we meet each year to elect representatives and generally catch up on the year past as well as make plans for the future.

Here are some of the key highlights from this year's meeting. The reports ran to some 9 pages, so trust me, you don't want to read it all! The Tower Captain, Malcolm, reported on



the loss of our dear friend Richard Cann last September and, the special ringing that had taken place for him. He noted how pleased we are to have so many new band members progressing with their ringing to the point that they are now able to ring with us on Sundays and we have seen Sunday service ringing really progress with us being able to ring all our 12 bells more often. In fact, since the A.G.M., we now also have two young sisters learning to ring, it's lovely to have some younger people getting involved. Their interest was as a result of one of the youth group tours of the tower, which is wonderful. Having shown several youth groups around and with the tours on Heritage Day too, we estimate that we have introduced something like 120 people to the art of ringing over the last year.

Other reports included the celebrations for Solihull Borough Anniversaries, The Mayor's visit to us and our invitation to the Mayor's Parlour in return. Bell Sunday celebrations included our handbell ringing with The Junction. Other events were our Ringers Ramble, Annual Dinner and our two Ringing Outings, one in the Spring visiting towers in Derbyshire and the other, a shorter trip in the Autumn, to Taylor's Bell Foundry in Loughborough. The Secretary, Sand, was able to report about the visitors that we have hosted. People have travelled from all over the country to arrange special ringing here in Solihull as the bells are so highly regarded amongst ringers far and wide. In fact, we continue to have bookings for ringers wishing to visit us through the coming year but perhaps the one we are most looking forward to is our inclusion in the fringe events as part of the Ringing World National Youth Contest, Saturday 5th July. Whilst the centre for the competition will now be St. Martin's Birmingham, our bells will be available to young ringers visiting the Midlands from all over the U.K. And we're hoping to have a mini ring in the churchyard too, you really ought to come along and have a look and listen! It's truly exciting to meet so many young ringers at these events, many of whom it has to be said, are probably already more expert than many of our band members! The young have such an advantage of age when it comes to learning more complex ringing.

Roundabout

Our Treasurer, Margaret, was able to report that our finances are all in order, this is important in helping us to maintain the bells and their installation on behalf of the Parish. So, fitting then too that our Tower Keeper, Kathryn, was able to report our bells as being in good condition in view of the maintenance programme she has in place. This coming year we will have our quinquennial inspection by the bell foundry so, we wait with bated breath to find out if any significant work is required. The Rector was able to update us with plans for resolving the water ingress issues we have in the tower. Over the last couple of years, we have had water coming in from around the spire and even into the top of the stair turret so, this really is something that needs to be progressed. Happily, we now have a representative on the Church and Churchyard Committee and Richard is looking forward to his first meeting which will be happening very soon.

We elected several new members to the band. Perhaps I might one day make time to check back and see how many members we have ever had? For the purposes of safeguarding training, we keep a current list of Sunday service ringers but once a member of the St. Alphege Guild of Bell Ringers, always a member! We have no rules to exit anyone so with many past members, many of whom come back to visit us, we are an ever-growing society!

As the Sunday service band grows, we have decided to trial ringing for longer on Sunday mornings. We already ring for 45 minutes on the second Sunday of the month when we ring between the All Age Service and the 11 o'clock service so, we will now be ringing for 45 minutes before the 10:30 a.m. Eucharists too.

With dates set for the coming year's social events the Rector brought the meeting to a close. The coffee cups were washed up and the cakes packed away and now we look forward to another successful year of ringing.

Stop press!

After an initial ready recon we believe we have just elected our 180th member to the Guild!

Sand Cooper
Tower Secretary

New Car Parking Scheme for the Oliver Bird Hall

There is now a designated email address obhcarpark@solihullparish.org.uk for all O.B.H. car park queries.

This email address has been added to the car park information sheet and query form on the Parish website and the Facebook post has been updated.

Roundabout

Shared Sorrow and the Joy of Remembrance at St. Helen's

When my husband Derek died in May 2024 one of the first cards I received was from **Sheila Cross**, with a reassuring message to comfort me in losing 'the love of my life'. A reminder to me of her sudden loss of Tony, leaving her a young widow with her son Peter only 17 years old at the time. Sadly, before Derek's funeral she too had died. It was shocking news. Looking back, Sheila was one of the first people I knew in the St. Helen's congregation, greeting us at church enthusiastically and inviting our six year old daughter Jo to join the Sunday School. Over the years Sheila worked for a time as a nurse and also contributed to the life of St. Helen's with the Bereavement Group, Pastoral Care and running an accredited training course for the Diocese. Hands-on in her concern for those around her, she was actively involved with SCAH. She also loved cooking, gardening, art and painting and was involved in producing the wall hangings. Together we produced a dramatic presentation of the life of William Tyndale. Latterly she took home communion to the housebound. Peter made a fine alphabetical tribute to his mother at her funeral, a letter for every valuable attribute she had and the love she showed and the part she played in the life and ministry of the church. She had a vigour about her which got things done. She was one of my 'go to' people and I miss her.



Sheila Harper was for me always a part of St. Helen's, although I cannot recall when we first met one another. I think both our families arrived in Solihull in about 1978. Sadly, her husband, Jim, died very suddenly and it was about this time I remember getting to know her better. She regularly attended the 10 a.m. Eucharist, sitting in the centre of the church. She came to the Evening Service every Sunday and the Healing Service monthly, and over the past 25 years came to Tuesday Prayers in St. Helen's chapel. She was loyal, committed and open minded to changing times and worship patterns. She belonged to CAMEO, supported social events and was 'flower keeper' during the week, with a key to the chapel enabling her to keep the arrangements fresh and watered. Over recent years, because of the restrictions of old age, personal contact has largely been through telephone conversations which for me were a blessing, sharing church and family news and being encouraged by her wisdom, until just before last Christmas. Thankfully she died peacefully in her sleep leaving behind a legacy of love for



Roundabout

her family, of which she was so proud, and for the church community which she served by her presence and prayerfulness. Astute, wise, humble and thankful for the many blessings of family and friends, and the neighbours in St. Helen's Road and within the church, her encouragement and example live on.

Elsie Blissett was a long-time member of St. Helen's, a lady of character, strong and direct, but also aware of her own vulnerability, and capable of contrition. She and her husband Bob were unknown to us when we first came here, but like a photograph emerging from the negative, gradually came into view. Orphaned in her teens, an only child and a lady of northern origin, she married young, had four children and became mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, dying this year, having reached her 100th birthday in September 2024. She was widowed during the Revd. Adrian Hughes' time as vicar, a sad and unexpected death. She went on to work for many years in the restaurant at Baddesley Clinton. Enjoying good health (doing press-ups in her nineties), she was well-known in St. Helen's Road and was supported by friends and neighbours over many years.



Always loyal to St. Helen's, attending Sunday morning Eucharist and supportive of new ventures, she also came to Tuesday Prayers every week. Creative and hands-on, she wore stylish clothes, could sew, and was also part of the team who made the St. Helen's wall hangings. She was a major contributor to the Wednesday Lunches, in charge of the kitchen, and part of one of four teams providing hot lunches weekly as part of an initiative by the late Diana Gregory to provide a hot meal for those living alone in the parish. Under her stewardship we met the highest health and safety standards when inspected annually. She was a member of CAMEO and socially proactive within the church and the community of St. Helen's Road. Elsie spent the last years of her life bed-ridden following a double fracture to one of her legs, but remained positive and thankful. I had lost touch with her, but am thankful for the experience of worshipping and working with her in the past and for our many telephone conversations, exchanging news and encouraging one another. An abiding memory of a simple, straightforward faith and a life lived with vigour and determination.

Jesus, Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, comfort us and give us joy in remembering.

Barbara Sears
March 2025



Easter Cards

The bookstall in St. Alphege will again have a selection of Easter Cards to send to family and friends. Please support the bookstall as all profits go to charity.

Let us Pray

Calendar and Prayer Intentions for April 2025

1	Frederick Dernison Maurice, Priest, teacher 1872	Bishop Michael	Chalgrove Crescent
2	Feria	St. Michael's Church	Charterhouse Drive
3	Feria	Our Rector and all the clergy	Chauson Grove
4	Feria	Bishop Esther	Chelthorn Way
5	Feria	Our Parish Wardens and the PCC	Cheltondale Road
6	5th Sunday in Lent (Passiontide begins)	For the coming celebration of Passiontide and Easter	Chelveston Crescent
7	Feria	Our youth and children's workers	Cherrington Way
8	Feria	St Helen's Church	Cherrywood Crescent
9	Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Pastor, Martyr, 1945	Martyrs for justice.	Chesterton Close
10	William Law, Spiritual Writer, 1761	Spiritual directors and writers	Cheveridge Close
11	George Selwyn, First Bishop of New Zealand, 1878	The Church in New Zealand	Chilwell Close
12	Feria	St. Alphege's Church	Chipstone Close
13	Palm Sunday	Remembrance of Christ's humility.	Church Hill Close
14	Monday of Holy Week	Our Director of Music and all our choirs	Church Hill Road
15	Tuesday of Holy Week		Clarewell Avenue
16	Wednesday of Holy Week	All church volunteers	Claverdon Close
17	Maundy Thursday	That we may be called to serve one another	Compton Close
18	Good Friday	For all who suffer or who are in despair.	Coppice Close
19	Easter Eve	That despair may turn to hope.	Cornyx Lane
20	Easter Day	For the spread of the Easter message throughout the world	Cotheridge Close
21	Monday of Easter Week	Deputy Wardens and the DCCs	Cranford Grove
22	Tuesday of Easter Week	Our youth and children's workers	Cryersoak Close
23	Wednesday of Easter week	Our verger	Damson Lane
24	Thursday of Easter week	The Mothers Union	Damson Parkway
25	Friday of EaSter Week	Our servers	Danford Lane
26	Saturday of Easter Week	The homeless and SCAH	Deer Park Way
27	The Second Sunday of Easter	The Anglican Communion	Dingle Lane
28	George, martyr, patron of England	The People of England	Dorchester Road
29	Mark the Evangelist	The See of Alexandria and all Christians in Egypt	Dormston Close
30	Pandita Ramabai, Translator of the Scriptures, 1922	Scripture translators and commentators	Dovehouse Lane

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

From the St. Alphege Register

Baptisms

16 th February	Ivy Kelly Jacob Ivey-Bull	Aida Kelly Mia McCann
2 nd March	Verity Winterbottom	

Weddings

None

Renewal of Vows

None

Funerals

27 th February	Raymond College at St. Alphege
6 th March	Richard Austen at Robin Hood Crematorium
13 th March	Mary Prees at St. Alphege
18 th March	Anne Kemp at St. Alphege Barbara Eccles at St. Helen
28 th March	Paul Mills at Woodlands Crematorium

Interment of Ashes

20 th February	Penny Brotherton
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Names taken from the Chantry Book for Remembrance in April

Leslie Brotherton, priest	Neville Freeth	Vivien Soden
Terence Butt	Eric Greasley	Margaret Stenhouse
Arthur Owen Caldicott	Wilfred Gregory	John Wallis
Eileen Edwards	Burmah Hall	Mark Warrior
Joyce Eyre	John Harrison	David William Wyldes
Mabel Florance	John Keyte	Bob Maw



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>

Worship Notes for April 2025

The month of April takes us through *Passiontide* well into *Eastertide*. We journey with Jesus on His last earthly journey into Jerusalem where He rode in triumph into the Holy City only to be betrayed and denounced by His enemies. We travel the way of the cross and stand before our Saviour at Calvary on Good Friday. But then on Easter Eve despair turns into the utmost joy as the empty tomb opens and we can proclaim once more 'Alleluia' - the triumph of life over death, of good over evil.

6th April - Passion Sunday

This marks the start of *Passiontide*, the two Sundays before Easter in which we focus on Christ's suffering.

13th April - Palm Sunday

At the start of Holy Week we celebrate Our Lord's entry on a donkey into Jerusalem with His disciples in a triumph that was to be only too short-lived. We shall celebrate the occasion at St. Alphege with the *Liturgy of the Palms* (starting with a procession from the town centre at 10.00 a.m.) followed by an All-age Holy Communion at 10.30 a.m. At St. Helen's there will be a dramatized reading of the *Passion* from St. Luke's Gospel.

Holy Week

During *Holy Week* there will be various services at the three churches of the Parish. The principal ones fall during the last three days, the '*Triduum*'.

17th April - Maundy Thursday

We remember Our Lord's final meal with His disciples just before His Passion in which He washed their feet in an act of service and humility and foretold His coming death in the breaking of bread and blessing of the cup. At St. Alphege's there will be Eucharists at 10.30 a.m. and 7.30 p.m. – the latter followed by the Watch, recalling Jesus's agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. There will be Eucharists at St. Michael's 6 p.m. – a garden service, and at St. Helen's, a Eucharist at 7.30 p.m. with washing of feet.

18th April - Good Friday

We recall Our Lord's suffering and Crucifixion on Calvary, meditating on the mysteries of His sacrifice for us and for all creation. There will be services throughout the Parish. The usual *Walk of Witness* will take place in the town centre when Christians of all traditions come together. It will begin at St. Augustine's at 10.45 a.m., proceed to Mell Square for a service, and return to St. Alphege's for a blessing. Afterwards hot cross buns will be served at the Oliver Bird Hall. At St. Alphege's there will be Devotions at the Foot of the Cross at 2.00 p.m. and at St. Helen's *Tenebrae* at 7.30 p.m.

19th April - Holy Saturday

In the morning at 9.30 a.m. a quiet refectation at St. Helen's. In the evening, we begin our Easter celebrations with the *Easter Vigil* at St Alphege's, 7.30 p.m. The new Paschal Candles from across the Parish will be lit and blessed. The service ends with the first communion of *Easter tide*.

20th April - Easter Day

On this most glorious day of the Christian year at the culmination of *Holy Week* we celebrate the joys and hope of the Resurrection after the sombreness of Lent and the sorrows of the Crucifixion. There will be Eucharists at all three churches, including an early morning service at St. Michael's and all age worship at St. Alphege's.

27th April - Second Sunday in Easter – also known as *Low Sunday*. At St. Alphege there will be a parade service at 10.30 a.m. to celebrate *St. George's Day*.

Stephen Linstead

The Guardians of St. Alphege Parish Church, Solihull

The trustees of the Guardians invite you to
Light and Sound at St. Alphege Church
Tuesday 8th April, 7.30 to 9.30pm. St. Alphege Church

All welcome. Free admission.

Donations to our registered charity will be welcome!

Light. The newly installed lighting has transformed the presentation of our Grade 1 listed church. See for yourself the range of settings available to highlight the architecture and the atmosphere inside.



Sound. For many a century the ringing of our bells has been a backdrop to the life and history of Solihull and its church. Meet the bellringers, hear their story, ask questions and enhance your understanding of the mysteries of what is going on just below the spire.

Social. Meet the many others who care about St. Alphege Church, its people and its complex history. Refreshments will be available.

April 2025 Services

Wednesday 2nd April

St. Michael 10.00 a.m. Eucharist

Thursday 3rd April

St. Alphege 10.30 a.m. Eucharist, Prayers for Healing, and Anointing

Sunday 6th April – Lent 5 Passiontide (Jesus in the City)

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 April

St. Michael 10.00 a.m. Eucharist

Thursday 10th April

St. Alphege 10.30 a.m. Eucharist

Palm Sunday (Jesus on the Cross) 13th April

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 – *with dramatized Passion Reading from Luke's Gospel.*
High Street 10.00 a.m. Procession – Liturgy of the Palms Procession
Join us by Clark's shoe shop on Solihull High Street as we remember Jesus' triumphant journey into Jerusalem on a donkey before the events of Holy Week unfold.
St. Alphege 10.30 a.m. All Age Holy Communion – Passion Liturgy
In place of the sermon, we hear a dramatized reading performed by Solihull Parish Youth.
St. Michael 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion – *with dramatized Passion Reading from Mark's Gospel.*
St. Alphege 5.00 p.m. Evensong

Monday of Holy Week 14th April

St. Alphege 7.30 p.m. Eucharist
A said service, led by Fr. Andrew.

Tuesday of Holy Week 15th April

St. Alphege 7.30 p.m. Stations of the Cross
We follow in Christ's footsteps on the way of the Cross using images placed around St. Alphege Church.

Wednesday of Holy Week 16th April

St. Michael	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	7.30 p.m.	Taizé

A meditative candlelit service which uses a simple musical setting of scriptural phrases led by a small ensemble.

Maundy Thursday 17th April

St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Michael Chapel and Garden	6.00 p.m.	Maundy Thursday Journey
St. Helen	7.30 p.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	7.30 p.m.	Eucharist

A retelling of the story from Upper Room to Gethsemane ending with short act of worship.

Including the washing of feet.

The Liturgy of The Last Supper, with choir; followed by The Watch until 10 p.m.

Good Friday 18th April

St. Alphege	9.45 a.m.	Exploring the Easter Story
Town Centre	11.00 a.m.	Churches Together Walk of Witness
St. Alphege	2.00 p.m.	Devotions at the Foot of the Cross
St. Helen	7.30 p.m.	Tenebrae

An interactive service for all ages

Starting at St. Augustine's Church and including a short service in Mell Square with distribution of hot cross buns. Refreshments follow.

A solemn service where we hear about the last hours of Christ's life and his death on the cross through words and music.

A service of light and shade in the chapel.

Holy Saturday 19th April

St. Helen	9.30 a.m.	Quiet Morning
St. Alphege	7.30 p.m.	Easter Vigil

A Holy Saturday Church – with input from Suzette, our Pioneer Minster, and sacred space for personal contemplation.

The first Eucharist of Easter, with blessing of Paschal Candles, and choir.

Easter Day (Jesus in Glory) 20th April

St. Michael Chapel & Garden	6.30 a.m.	Easter Dawn Service
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

A simple outdoor service as the sun rises.

Followed by flowering of the cross (outside).

Continued on next page

April 2025 Services *continued*

Wednesday 23rd April

St. Michael 10.00 a.m. Eucharist

Thursday 24th April

St. Alphege 10.30 a.m. Eucharist

Sunday 27th April – Easter 2

St. Alphege 8.00 a.m. Said Eucharist

St. Helen 10.00 a.m. Morning Praise

St. Alphege 10.30 a.m. Sung Eucharist – St. George's Day Parade Service

St. Michael 10.30 a.m. Eucharist

St. Alphege 5.00 p.m. Evening Prayer

Wednesday 30th April

St. Michael 10.00 a.m. Eucharist

Thursday 1st May

St. Alphege 10.30 a.m. Eucharist, Prayers for Healing and Anointing

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.

Youth Stuff

The Youth Group continues to meet on a Friday evening in the Oliver Bird 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, 5 p.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



In this month's Parish News, I'd like to shine a light on our Wednesday lunchtime recital series.

Every Wednesday lunchtime during term time, and sometimes in the school holidays too, we organise a short musical concert which is free and open to all to attend. The performers range from our own staff to local musicians to Conservatoire students, to professionals from further afield – including international performers on occasion with an organist from Thailand last summer. These musicians perform a range of music from historically-informed Baroque string quartets to contemporary compositions and including classical favourites along the way – we have even had world premieres of new works in our recital series! The instruments range from solo organ and piano to voice, to individual orchestral instruments, to various



chamber music groups. The most unusual instrument we've had so far was Emilija playing the kanklės (above), a harp-like instrument which is the national instrument of Lithuania.

We have some dedicated supporters of the recital series, who perform every year, and we are grateful for their musicianship and the pleasure they bring through their performances. There are also new performers who approach us to have the opportunity to perform, and we are well supported by contacts at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and Solihull School.

I would also like to pay tribute to our volunteer team who bake cakes, serve refreshments and welcome people each week – the series would not be possible without their ongoing commitment.

If you've not been before, why not give it a try, and come along one Wednesday lunchtime to listen to a performance, enjoy some home-made cake and a cuppa, and catch up with people too in the middle of the week.

Performers are announced in the Pewslip each week so you can look to see whether the forthcoming performance is of particular interest to you. Here's a couple of key dates for your diaries, which are often popular performances:

9th April – Alex Woodrow

11th June – St Alphege CE Junior School SongSquad

But there will be lots of other interesting performers lined up, so do keep an eye out for information. Christopher Churcher, who is working in the parish office, will be performing a voice recital in the summer – so look out for that date and support his performance if you can.

Isabel Baumber



The Guardians of St Alphege Parish Church

Light and Sound at St. Alphege Church **Our first fundraising event of 2025**

Tuesday 8th April, 7.30 to 9.30pm, St. Alphege Church

Please see the advertisement published elsewhere in this edition of in Parish News. Free entry. Open to all. Refreshments available.

This event will surely highlight why our Parish Church is in the frame when an image of Solihull is required. Andy Halstead is preparing to demonstrate how the new lighting can show off both the whole and the various corners and features of St. Alphege.

The tower, spire, bells and bellringing are particular local treasures. Sand Cooper and the tower team will give us an insight into the St. Alphege bellringing history, how it all works and finish with a question and answer session.

The Archives

The Church of England has legally backed guidelines on how a parish should look after its archive. 'Keep or bin?' is a useful summary. Important documents such as parish registers need to eventually be safely deposited in a regulated record office. Ours is at Warwick (Warwick County Record Office). They continue to accept material we pass on to them.

Before items get to Warwick, they are kept in places such as the Parish Office, the undercroft in the Oliver Bird Hall, the Sacristy and quite possibly in other obscure corners such as the boot of someone's car?

Our Parish Magazines go back to 1880. They are an important local heritage resource. Early editions are available in Warwick. Later editions are available in Solihull Library. We retain a collection. Other collections have been brought to my notice in homes around Solihull. The Guardians and many more people, I believe, would like to assemble a comprehensive/complete collection which is secure, yet accessible, on the St.Alphege site. Discussions have begun as to whether this is feasible.

Roger Shinton (Trustee)
rogershinton@outlook.com

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Floodlighting

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

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. Alternatively, you can contact Sheila Payne, details below.

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 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.

Sheila Payne

Scheme organiser:-

0121 706 0520

email: russellpayne110@aol.com

The Church was floodlit in March 2025 to remember the following:

6 th March	In loving memory of Fraser Mitchell
7 th March	Jane Yarnold. In memory of a beloved wife, mum and grandma.
10 th March	Loving and treasured memories of Charles Dennis Hancock.
13 th March	In loving memory of Betty Hartley on the anniversary of her birthday.
15 th March	In loving memory of a dear son and brother, Adrian Paul Cripps on the 5 th anniversary of his death.
16 th March	In ever loving memory of David Francis Wright.
16 th March	In loving memory of Stan Boulter.
18 th March	Anne Kemp. A step on the road to home. Miss me, but let me go.
19 th March	Vera Yarnold. In memory of a dear mum, grandma and great-grandma.
23 rd March	In loving memory of Harry Hartley, Rector of St Alphege.
23 rd March	In loving memory of Jean McDonough.



Join us for
our next
event

**Blossomfield Grange care home,
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Thursday 8th May, 2pm - 4pm

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CHURCH 4 FAMILIES

April

Sunday Worship

The Junction is a short family focussed service that meets on Sunday mornings. Here are the April themes:

On **6th April** the Junction will meet at 9.15 a.m. in the Oliver Bird Hall when we will talk about how Jesus heals and how we can be kind to people who are ill or sad.

On **Palm Sunday 13th April** the Junction will meet at 9.15 a.m. in the Oliver Bird Hall to learn all about Palm Sunday. After the service we will walk up to the High Street to join in the Palm Sunday procession.

On **Easter Sunday 20th April** everyone will meet in the church building at 9.15 a.m. for **for an Easter Day All age celebration** with the worship band and there will be chocolate!!

On **27th April** the Junction and St Helen's Sunday club will be taking a break but do join the 10.30 a.m. service at St Alphege where the uniformed organisations will be involved throughout the service in celebrating St George

Other Activities

Friday 18th April Good Friday- Exploring the Easter story
St Alphege Church 9.45 a.m.

Pause and Pray Every Monday in term time 9 a.m.-9.30 a.m. Room 5
Oliver Bird Hall

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



What?

Lots of hands-on crafty fun
A short celebration story and prayer
Ending with a hot meal for all!

When?

Friday 4.00pm - 6.00pm
28th February / 28th March / 16th May

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.

email - l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk



Good Friday - Exploring The Easter Story

St Alphege Church

Friday 18th April 9.45 am



A special interactive
service for all ages.

Praise and Play

A relaxed, stay and play session.
A fun way to meet others
and grow friendships.

Interactive songs and bible stories
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Linda Hicks on 07838 67077

email - l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk



Entente *Cordiale*

Saturday June 28th 2025

Shirley Methodist Church, 3:00pm

Enjoy a Summer Afternoon of great works by English and French Composers, showcasing the music that Chandos singers will be performing in Normandy at the end of July.

Conductor: Dexter Drown
Piano: Iain Jackson

Tickets £17

(Includes programme and interval refreshments)

Under 18s Free

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We continue to be very grateful to Revd. Nick, Revd. Roger and Revd. Sue who come each month to take our 10 a.m. Holy Communion services and are delighted that the Sunday Club, which meets at St. Helen's on the 4th Sunday of each month, now attracts a good number of families, especially now that the Junction no longer runs on that Sunday. February also saw the start of Wholeness and Healing Communion Services for the Parish and these will continue at 6.30 p.m. on the third Sunday, hopefully with involvement and attendance from across the Parish.

During Lent we are, with the whole Parish, reading Tom Wright's book 'Lent and Easter for Everyone'. We have two groups meeting to study the book together, meeting on Monday afternoons and evenings. Because there are eight chapters we started at the end of February. It has also become a tradition for us to meet together for supper when there is a fifth Monday in the month. As one falls during Lent, we shall miss a week of studies together to eat together instead! We are very grateful to Geoff Ridgway who cooks for us on these occasions, with others bringing puddings.

At our Morning Praise Service on 16th March we shall be welcoming a speaker from the Church Army. This is one of the Christian charities that we have supported financially for many years and it will be good to hear more about the work that it does and help us to be more aware and prayerful about that work.

Our monthly coffee mornings continue to be an opportunity for us to get to know some of the residents of St. Helen's Road, and we have also seen many of them recently at the funerals of three ladies who were all part of our congregation and lived in the road. The monthly CAMEO meeting is another time when there is a good mix of church members with those who live in our community. The coffee mornings (second Wednesday of each month between 10.30 a.m. and 12 noon) and CAMEO (first Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m.) would welcome anyone who would like to come along.

Our Annual District Church Meeting will be on Palm Sunday 13th April, following our morning service which will include the Passion Reading. We are very grateful to those who serve on the District Church Council and all those who contribute to the life of the church through their involvement and service. During the week before Easter we shall again be distributing Easter cards to our neighbours with an invitation to come and join us on Easter morning outside church to share refreshments and put a flower on the empty cross.

Chris and Jenny Carrington



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See Website for more information

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Contact our Advertising Manager, Tim Drakeford

**TELEPHONE:
0121 705 4494**

Richard Austen

Richard Austen, a long-standing member of St. Michael's, died on 3rd February this year after a short illness. Richard and his wife Diana have both played an active part in the life of St. Michael's over many years. He was greatly involved with the planning and development in the new vicarage and chapel at Oak Cottage. This involvement continued until quite recently with various improvements and projects within the chapel. He was responsible for designing the altar and other items of furniture in the chapel. Richard was Deputy-Churchwarden for three years a little while ago, a duty he took very seriously and carried out extremely well. He served on the St. Michael's District Church Council and also the Parochial Church Council and other church committees. Until recently he was co-ordinator of the St. Michael's monthly draw which over the years has raised a considerable sum of money for the church. His funeral at Robin Hood was attended by many of his friends from St. Michael's as well as many representatives of the many other organisations he was involved with. Outside of church he belonged to a number of organisations, some of whom gave tributes at the funeral. He was always very willing to help and advise where needed and was a very sociable person who got on well with everyone. Our thoughts and prayers go to Diana and his family, and Richard is someone we shall miss greatly at St. Michael's.



Wendy Westley on Her New Book

It's been a hat trick for St. Michael's this March, as Wendy Westley has been the third writer to be published, following in the steps of the Revd. Martin Tunnicliffe and Mrs. Annette Aldridge.

Wendy's first book '*Sun hats & staying home*' is a small collection of holiday stories and poetry, as well as describing the joys of staying at home. It was launched at Touchwood on 1st March.

Wendy has now been published in several poetry magazines as well as the church magazine and also writes for an international online Women's Bible study community. Wendy and Fr. Simon are holding a poetry and reading evening to promote Wendy's book in St. Michael's Chapel on Saturday 29th March at 7 p.m.



St Michael

During Lent Fr. Simon continues his series of artwork linked to Lent at St. Michael's Chapel on Wednesday afternoons from 1.45 p.m. until 3 p.m. In April two sessions remain on 2nd and 9th.

One of the assets we have at St. Michael's is the lovely garden which is used occasionally for worship. During Holy Week and Easter there are two services which will be held there. On Maundy Thursday 17th April there is a 6 p.m. Garden Service and on Easter Day at 6.30 a.m. there will be an Easter Dawn Service.

Other services are:

Palm Sunday 10.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist at Sharmans Cross School

Wed 16th April 10 a.m. Holy Eucharist in the Chapel

Easter Day Holy Eucharist at 10.30 a.m. in Sharmans Cross School.

Paul Smith

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“When Hope Began”

"Why is it called Good Friday if somebody died on that day?"

This was the (*to my mind a rather excellent*) question asked by a member of [Food4Thought](#) recently while we were discussing all the details of Lent. I was so pleased to hear someone ask this – I thanked them there and then – because that is the same question that I asked every year of my childhood, and nobody seemed to be able to give me the answer. It is also the question that many people will ask to themselves but maybe won't have the courage to ask aloud. I wonder if you have ever asked the same question, or are around someone who has asked you that same question. What would **you** say, if asked, *"Why is it called Good Friday if somebody died on that day?"*?

I never got an answer to that question as a child. Now, as an adult, I know that there are at least three very valid reasons:

The first is that it was originally known as God's Friday, in recognition that what happened here is of God and, over time, it got made into Good Friday – a reminder perhaps that God is good?

¹⁹ "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. (Luke 18:19)

The second is that in old English 'good' was the equivalent of 'Holy'. So, calling something good was of God; it was holy. Holy Friday. (*As an aside, try googling 'Holy Friday' and see what comes up. Suzette.)*

The third is that Good Friday is like a part of a jigsaw puzzle; and that only when seen together with Easter Sunday can we get the whole picture. And that picture is of hope.

Therefore, my heart is glad, and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope. (Acts 2:26)

This is what **we** all need to know about Good Friday:

⁶⁻⁸ Jesus, also known as Christ, arrives right on time to make this (hope) happen. He didn't, and doesn't, wait for us to get ready. He presented himself for this sacrificial death when we were far too weak and rebellious to do anything to get ourselves ready. And even if we hadn't been so weak, we wouldn't have known what to do anyway. We can understand someone dying for a person worth dying for, and we can understand how someone good and noble could inspire us to selfless sacrifice. But God put his love on the line for us by offering his Son Jesus in sacrificial death while we were of no use whatever to him.

(Romans 5:6-8, The Message Bible)

This is the beginning of hope.

Good Friday is a moment in time. Today we can know from the reading of scripture that Good Friday, Holy Friday, God's Friday, was not the end of the story. It's when the hope began.

That first Good Friday the disciples huddled together after the Crucifixion until they knew what to do next. They needed that connection and that hope. And so it is with us, the Church. We are all just disciples of Jesus huddled together asking God what we should do

next. But let's not get stuck in Good Friday mode, because we know the second half of the puzzle. We know the joy of Easter Day.

Food4Thought takes place in the local pub, the Greville Arms, and anyone who wants to explore themes and questions around the Christian faith is free to join us. And like the disciples after that first Good Friday, let's us the Church get out there more often, beyond our four walls, and let's connect with our local communities more often, because on Good Friday – and every day - we carry a hope with us that the whole world needs to hear.

A prayer for Good Friday:

*"Lord Jesus, we stand at the foot of your cross today and mourn your death.
But we also rejoice that because of your great love, death could not keep you down!
Help us to remember your sacrifice today – the day that hope began - and every day.
Amen."*

Thanks for listening!

Suzette

Save the Date!

Our next Parish quiet morning will take place on **Saturday 19th April, Holy Saturday**, at St. Helen's church. Why not save the date and plan to come along or, if you want to know more in the meantime, speak to me (Suzette) about it.

I'll leave you with comments that were made after our last Holy Saturday Quiet Morning, where participants were blessed as follows:

What I have valued most is ...

The time and space which isn't usually available.

The chance to sit and 'be' without rushing around doing things.

Having two whole hours to pause and reflect and just 'be'.

Time to unwind.

No distractions.

The feeling of peace and contentment.

Have a hopeful Good Friday and see you on Holy Saturday!



Churches
Together in
Central Solihull

Lent Breakfasts

Churches in our area are following Tom Wright's book 'Lent and Easter for Everyone' in their sermons and house groups and these breakfasts will introduce the topics for the following weeks with talks from members of our churches.

Saturdays in March and April 2025
8.30am to 10.00am

Saturday 1 March - Jesus in the Wilderness

Saturday 8 March - Jesus Among the Crowds

Saturday 15 March - Jesus in Prayer

Saturday 22 March - Jesus Among Friends

Saturday 29 March - Jesus Among Enemies

Saturday 5 April - Jesus in the City

Saturday 12 April - Jesus on the Cross

Saturday 26 April - Jesus in Glory

held at Solihull Methodist Church, B91 1LG
by Solihull Station - car park off Station Road

Simple Breakfast with cereals and rolls, tea and coffee etc -
Cost £3 each

We do thank Solihull Methodist Church for their hospitality for these breakfasts.

All welcome and please bring friends

www.centralsolihullchurches.org.uk

Lent Quiet Morning

'A Holy Saturday Church'



St. Helen's Church Centre, St. Helen's Road

'Holy Saturday', Saturday 19th April 2025.

Refreshments available @ **9.30am for a 10 a.m. start.**

10am – 10.10 a.m. Opening worship (Chapel)

10.10 a.m. first input session

10.15 a.m. – 11.10 a.m. sacred space**

11.10 a.m. second input session

11.15 a.m. – 12.10 p.m. sacred space**

12.15 p.m. closing worship (Chapel)

Ends 12.30 p.m.

*...but do take up the option to bring along a packed lunch
so we can eat together before we leave.*

***'Sacred space'* is designed as time for you to spend
with God on whatever it is that has been 'flagged up' for you during
the input or worship.

Optional resources will be provided.

Contact Suzette to book: 0121 709 0884 or
s.maguire@solihullparish.org.uk

News from the Church of England

Passers-by in a popular area of London are leaving more than 100 prayer requests a month after they are invited in by a nearby church for a special evening where they light candles, listen to music and pray.

Congregation members at the Parish of Our Most Holy Redeemer in Clerkenwell, which worships in the Catholic tradition of the Church of England, head out on a Thursday night every month after Mass with votive candles and lanterns to invite people in the busy Exmouth Market area into the church.

Vicar Fr. Christopher Trundle said the *Night Light* evening, focused on prayer, contemplation and adoration in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, is attracting up to 150 people, with more than 100 prayer requests left by those visiting. He said that congregation members go out into the crowds in Exmouth Market to *"invite people to encounter the love and beauty of God in Jesus Christ"*.

"We are very clear that we are inviting people into Jesus's presence and there is a growing community, committed not only to praying for all who come into church, but also making this space for Adoration in their lives each month. It has been wonderful to see how sacramental worship and ancient ways of praying are really connecting with people today."

"At Night Light we invite passers-by into church to light a candle, and we leave cards for prayer requests. There is live music, ranging from the traditional to the contemporary."

"People have profound reactions and are deeply, deeply moved by what they experience, without a doubt. Some ask for pastoral conversations and others ask to be prayed for, perhaps because of something that has happened in their life."

"Where people have left prayer requests, we pray through them over the next few days."

You can find out more about the work of St Stephen's at:

<https://www.holyredeemerclerkenwell.com/>

Fr. Simon

Text Reproduced from:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/stories-and-features/diners-and-passers-busy-social-venue-leave-more-100-prayer-requests-month>

OLIVER BIRD HALL BOOKINGS

Enquiries are welcome for the use of the Hall and meeting rooms for social gatherings, christenings, anniversaries, meetings, etc.

Visit the website on:

<https://www.solihullparish.org.uk/church-hall-hire/>

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Update from the Parish Wardens

The Worship Review continues in April. Thank you for your responses to the questionnaire which are being analysed by Christopher. In April we are asking some groups to act as focus groups for the review in order to explore some aspects in more detail. A report will be issued in the coming weeks.

'Lent and Easter for Everyone' continues. Please take the opportunity to use the study groups, the book and the breakfasts as we continue through Lent towards Easter at the end of the month. It isn't too late to join a group!

The Churches Together *Good Friday Walk of Witness* is being held on **Friday 18th April – starting at St. Augustine's at 11 a.m. as usual.** Do join us for this important act of witness to our Lord.

Thank you to Mothers' Union for a wonderful Pancake Party held just before the start of Lent. Very well organized with more people – children, and adults young and old – than ever.

And the first St. Michael's and St. Helen's *Wassail Evening* was a great success at the beginning of February – fun, food, music and laughter were all in evidence. We look forward to the next.

The first *Parish Sunday Healing Service* for some years was held in February at St. Helen's and was a good and helpful occasion. Do consider coming at 6.30 p.m. in St. Helen's Chapel on the Third Sunday of each month. With much happening this month, there will not be one in April; the next will be on Sunday 18th May.

If you have not been to St. Alphege Churchyard recently, please do visit to see the 'Raising of the Crowns' of many trees so that the view is much better and you can walk unimpeded by low branches – this photo shows the effect – thanks to David Sturdee and his team for this.



With our A.G.M.s in April, we are seeking nominations for Wardens, and members of our Parish and District Councils. These are vital roles for the running and direction of our Parish and so please do consider whether God is calling you to stand, or whether you could ask someone else to stand. All our District Churches have only one Deputy Warden where there should be two, and our councils have vacancies to be filled. At our A.P.C.M. on 28th April in the O.B.H., we will be discussing proposed changes to the District Schemes as part of the Team Ministry Review. Do come along to have your say and vote.

Please do continue to pray for our Parish and our Mission to it.

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Matters of Faith

Be Still and Know

Prayer. Sometimes it seems easy, sometimes it seems hard. Jesus' disciples asked him how they should pray, and he gave them what is still the most well-known prayer of all: the *Lord's Prayer*. It's the prayer we use in every service, the prayer which, I once discovered, is the prayer that remains in the memory even when dementia has taken almost everything else away.

But how did Jesus himself pray? We have just a few examples: His prayer for his disciples in John 17, his prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, both of which we shall be thinking about as we come to Holy Week this month. But mostly we only hear of Him retreating to a remote place to pray, only to be interrupted by crowds of people. We shouldn't forget, however, another time He withdrew to pray, those forty days in the wilderness, which was uninterrupted until Satan appeared at the end, to tempt him.

Or perhaps it wasn't that simple. Perhaps we might think that those temptations emerged in his own mind as he contemplated what the Father, who had so recently proclaimed him as his beloved Son, wanted Him to do with His life. Those long days, that long contemplation, that intense listening, took away any possible wrong answers and strengthened Him to perform the ministry, the sacrifice, He knew he must take on.

In the Fourteenth Century in England lived a woman whose years of silent contemplative prayer led to a spiritual classic that is still today for many Christians a way to deepen their prayer life. She is, of course, Julian of Norwich.

We don't know her actual name. St. Julian was the name of the church in which she spent many years as an anchoress, a solitary nun, who spent her days in prayer and in offering spiritual guidance through a small window that gave access to the outside world. Her journey began when she was thirty years old and suffering from an illness from which she, and all those around her, believed would lead to her immanent death. As she lay in her bed, the priest who had come to minister to her held a crucifix before her eyes and as she looked at it, she had a vision of our Lord's passion in vivid detail and that vision led to further visions. She did not die but spent, not forty days, but years contemplating what those visions meant. And those years led to the book, *Revelations of Divine Love*, believed to be the first book written by a woman in English. In it she speaks of a God of profound love and forgiveness. And it gave her a profound feeling of hope, as represented in a saying which has passed into the language: "*All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.*" And I suppose the famous of her visions, one which gave her such hope is of a small object, the size of a hazelnut, in the palm of her hand. When she asks what it might be, God says that it is all that is, and though it looks so fragile, it continues to exist because God loves it.

Today there is a movement that allows us, in a small way, to follow Julian's way of contemplative prayer: the Julian meetings, which I have experienced myself over the years. The format for the meetings is not strict but always at the heart of it is thirty minutes of silent prayer. The silence is introduced by a short passage from Julian or one of the other mystics, such as John of the Cross or Teresa of Avila or the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* or a piece of Scripture.

Many people have found that a helpful way of deepening their prayer life, but contemplative prayer can also be done on our own and as Julian found, as our Lord experienced, it is a way of not so much talking to God, as we do when we say the *Lord's Prayer*, or any other form of intercession, but of listening to what God wants to say to us. And the forty days of Lent are a good time to make some time to be still and silent, to empty our minds and listen for his voice.

Rev. Anne

Mothers' Union - Birmingham Tree People

At the March meeting St. Alphege M.U. welcomed Tonia Clark, a Trustee of the Birmingham Tree People, to talk about the work the tree people do in the city to care for public trees, those in the streets of other public places. The Tree People are a group of urban forest volunteers that gather information about local trees in the Birmingham area. Their aim is to "Plant, Protect and Promote trees and the urban forest".



Tonia gave a presentation about trees, pollination and flowers. Examples of fruits, seeds, as well as leaves, including catkins, nuts and other tree samples. were shown to the M.U. group who were asked to identify the different species. Some members were better at this than others!

If anyone would like to volunteer and learn more about trees there is a local group in Solihull; contact for the Solihull Tree Wardens is ian4trees@aol.com or <https://www.lovesolihull.org/solihull-tree>

The Birmingham contact is: [wardenshttps://birminghamtreepeople.org.uk/](https://birminghamtreepeople.org.uk/)

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For Your Diary

Thursday 3rd April : 1.00pm in the OBH. *Lent Lunch and Meditation* with Peter Haselhurst.

Thursday 17th April : Maundy Thursday - NO EUCHARIST.

Thursday 1st May : 1.30pm in the OBH. *Spirituality of Walking* with The Ven. Paul Taylor.

Thursday 15th May : 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 friendly Wives' monthly Lunch Club will meet on Friday 4th April. If you are interested in joining this welcoming group for fellowship and a good meal, please contact Carol Caldicott.

Carol Caldicott
0121 705 3168



St Alphege
All Age Eucharist
10.30 a.m. Sunday 13th April
9.15 a.m. Sunday 20th April

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

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