

CHURCH NEWS AND VIEWS

Christmas at St. Leonard's

Christmas Carol and Crib service

Reverend Ali led her first crib service, where the children presented small wooden nativity figures to accompany the story. Ali then performed the first magicians trick we have seen in church. Ali produced a garland spelling 'Christmas', with each letter revealing an aspect of the holy story. She tore off each of the 9 letters of Christmas - and magically, they reappeared in one piece with all the letters in the right order! How did she do that? Delicious refreshments of mulled wine, mince pies and chocolate followed as the church buzzed with excited chatter. The tree, beautifully decorated by Emma Thomas, sparkled and our crib held its usual mystery as the children gazed in at the figures. It was wonderful to have Birdingbury Choir singing 'Silent Night' again, plus a special carol composed by Bryan Tompkins. Thanks to Bryan and all the choir members. We hope that the choir might sing at one of our Easter services

Christmas Eve Communion

On Christmas Eve our eyes were on matchsticks as we stayed awake for late night Communion, again led by Rev Ali. The candlelit church looked magical as we gathered to celebrate the birth of the Saviour. That moment when we sing 'Yea Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning', at approximately midnight, is indeed a special moment.

Christmas morning service at St. Leonard's

I don't normally manage to get to church on Christmas morning but this year I did and thoroughly enjoyed the service. The sun streamed through the windows, the church was full and looked wonderful with the greenery and candles, the tree and, most importantly, the carved nativity figures in the crib by the altar.

Karen led a simple but moving celebration and was helped by all the children who enthusiastically banged and shook all the percussion instruments available! The children then followed Karen (a bit like the Pied Piper by then) and they placed the baby Jesus in the crib. We sang some lovely carols including the one specially composed by Bryan.

Of course we all managed to eat mince pies after the service and it was so nice to meet everyone's families. Then I went home to a delicious smell of roasting turkey. Thanks everyone for such a wonderful start to Christmas.

Jenny Preston

Rev. Alison Massey's letter

Dear Birdingbury friends

I always think that when February arrives we are on a downhill journey to spring. The days are getting slightly longer, the weather can be capricious but in general is getting milder: there is an air of expectation. Spring is so miraculous, the world seems to come alive after the winter when the grey skies and bare trees created landscapes that appeared barren. But underneath that barren exterior the plants and trees are preparing for rebirth, the livestock are awaiting the birth of their new offspring. God is working everyday miracles beneath our feet and in the fields.

Our lives can sometimes feel a bit like winter, barren and grey, but we need to remember that even in the darkest night and the greyest day that God is with us, nurturing that hidden part of us that is just waiting for the weather to change.

Our lives cannot always be spring with its hope for rejuvenation and zest for life, but if your life does feel like, as C.S. Lewis describes it in 'The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe', that it is always winter but never Christmas, then please don't hesitate to get in touch and see if we can, together, find that little spark of green that is waiting to come alive when everything else seems to have faded.

I hope and pray that you will feel the anticipation and excitement that spring brings, that the everyday miracles that God provides bring you comfort and pleasure and that deep in your heart you feel the presence and comfort of our Lord Jesus Christ, who like the spring, first had to die before bringing forth new life, new hope and a new relationship with God.

With love and prayers

Ali

My contacts are: email: reverendalimassey@gmail.com tel: 01788 814912 or 07837 124509 address: Clydfan, Main Street, Thurlaston, CV23 9JS

I usually work on Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday but feel free to contact me on other days if you need to talk with me.

Charity Donations received by St. Leonard's PCC in December 2016

Rugby Night Shelter - Leamington Hastings School service, St Leonard's £39.36

Rugby Night Shelter - Carol Singing £64.90

The Children's Society - Carols, Candles & Crib Service £139.13

Thank you very much indeed to all those who contributed to these donations.

Daphne Chippendale, PCC Treasurer

Churchwardens news from Dick and Karen

Church Planning: Away Day 2017

Dick and I told you in our last edition that we were part of a benefice planning day early in January with Reverend Ali and representatives from the other parishes in the Draycote Benefice. We are grateful to Peter Law and Andrew Armbrister for coming along with us. We had the opportunity to work with Rev Ali and the other parishes to consider strengths, challenges and opportunities, together with priorities for our mission. As is always the case, time ran short, but we are committed to reviewing our service provision, considering an alternative management structure for the benefice, reviewing administrative support for Rev Ali and developing our lay leadership – all in the short term. All these, and other things, will be pursued with energy and prayerful consideration during 2017.

We have two exciting initiatives to take forward. One is potentially a three-year alliance between our benefice and Global Care, a local charity. We are looking at how we can support their Shack Schools' project in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon through fund raising and other projects. This will hopefully engage all parishes across the benefice.

The other is 'Eco Church', an initiative which 'rewards' churches who seek to become as efficient as possible, such as utilising green energy, installing solar panels, reducing energy use, committing to Fair trade products or other eco ideas. We will undertake an assessment to establish our present level of engagement and then work towards a bronze, silver or gold level of attainment. We will keep you posted on how we are doing!

Karen and Dick

Regular events in Birdingbury and the Benefice

Thurs 2 Feb	2.30 pm Service and Tea at Bourton and Frankton Village Hall
Wed 8 Feb	10.30 am Home Communion, The Birbury, host Valerie Smith
Thurs 23 Feb	10.30 am Coffee and Chat in The Birbury
Thurs 2 March	2.30 pm Service and Tea at Bourton and Frankton Village Hall
Wed 8 March	10.30 am Home Communion, Jackie Westcott's, Loen, Main St
Thurs 30 March	10.30 am Coffee and Chat in The Birbury

Can you help? Why not be a volunteer?



RUGBY STREET PASTORS NEED VOLUNTEERS

Rugby Street Pastors are recruiting for additional volunteers to join one of their teams that patrol in the Town Centre during the night to help individuals in need on either one Friday or one Saturday per month.

To volunteer to be a Street Pastor, you need to meet the following criteria:

1. Be over the age of 18;
2. Be committed to a local Christian church for at least 12 months;
3. Complete the Street Pastors Application form;
4. Complete and pass an enhanced DBS check;
5. Obtain a positive reference from the senior leader of their church.
6. Be able to undergo a series of training modules prior to being commissioned and being permitted to patrol.
7. Be physically able to patrol Rugby Town centre from 10.00pm – 4.00am on either 1 Friday or 1 Saturday per month.

If you would like to know more about this exciting opportunity to demonstrate your Christian faith in a very practical way, or would like us to arrange for you to accompany a patrol as an observer, in order that you can *'try before you buy'*, then please contact either of the people below:

RSP Coordinator: Pete Hickey: rugby@streetpastors.org.uk or 07811 639715

RSP Recruiting and Training Coordinator: Bob Reeve: bob@rugbyelim.org.uk or

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Holiday Bible Club 2017 will be from 7th – 11th August this year

We are looking for volunteers to help with this event.

If you can give all week or just a few hours, we are looking for group leaders, group helpers, activity leaders, musicians etc.

Please contact Frankie Suffell: frankiesuffell@gmail.com

FEBRUARY and MARCH 2017 SERVICES in Draycote Benefice

Date	Place	Time	Service	Readings
Sun 5 Feb	Frankton Bourton Stretton	9.15 am 10.30 am 6.00 pm	Holy Communion BCP Holy Communion Evening Worship	
Sun 12 Feb	Stretton	10.30 am	Benefice Communion	
Sun 19 Feb	Birdingbury Bourton Frankton Stretton	10.30 am 10.30 am 10.30 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Morning Praise Morning Praise Morning Praise	<i>Romans Ch 5 vv 18 - 25</i> <i>Matthew Ch 6 vv 25 to end</i>
Sat 25 Feb	Bourton/ Frankton	3.45 pm	Celebrate@4 Bourton Vill. Hall	
Sun 26 Feb	Birdingbury Stretton	10.30 am 6.30 am	Morning Praise Holy Communion	<i>2 Peter Ch 1 vv 16 to end</i> <i>Matthew Ch 17 vv 1 - 9</i>
Tues 28 Feb	Birdingbury	9.00 am	Morning Prayer	
Sun 5 March Lent 1	Frankton Bourton	9.15 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion BCP Holy Communion	
Sun 12 March Lent 2	Stretton	10.30 am	Benefice Communion	
Sun 19 March Lent 3	Birdingbury Bourton Frankton Stretton	10.30 am 10.30 am 10.30 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Morning Praise Morning Praise Morning Praise	<i>Romans Ch 5 vv 1 - 11</i> <i>John Ch 4 vv 5 - 42</i>
Sat 25 March	Bourton/ Frankton	3.45 pm	Celebrate@4 Bourton Vill. Hall	
Sun 26 March Lent 4 Mothering Sunday	Birdingbury Frankton and Bourton Stretton	10.30 am 10.30 am 10.30 am	Family Service Holy Communion at Frankton Church Morning Praise	<i>Ephesians Ch 5 vv 8 - 14</i> <i>John Ch 9 vv 1 - 41</i>
Tues 28 March	Birdingbury	9.00 am	Morning Prayer	

This time tomorrow

In the hustle and bustle of a busy life I often find it difficult to think beyond the very moment I am in, the task I am completing, or the meeting I am chairing. At both the start and end of the day, my routine sees me, along with thousands of others, driving slowly in nose-to-tail traffic in and out of Birmingham.

In the evening, I will reflect on the day that has been and check the diary to see what meetings have been added since I left the office. I will have a general understanding, and sense, of what the following day will bring. Although my work involves working with, and giving support to, hundreds of people, much of this thinking and planning goes on alone in my head; its mine to manage.

A few weeks ago at St Leonards, I was introduced to an idea called 'TTT', standing for 'This Time Tomorrow'. Towards the end of the service, I and others were asked what we would be doing, this time tomorrow. It was slightly unsettling to be asked at 11am on a Sunday, in front of a congregation who largely know little about what my job actually entails, what I would be doing at 11am on Monday morning. As it happened, at 11am the following day I was due to be in the midst of uncertainty, chaos, panic, excitement, cynicism and fear as the organisation transitioned to a new operating model. Would we be able to deal with the 7000 emergency calls from the public? Would we be able to respond to their needs?

It felt odd, visualising myself there, whilst in Birdingbury Church that Sunday. Others disclosed what they would be doing at precisely the same time, activities which were far removed from mine, but as important within their own life. Having disclosed this, prayers were offered, asking for the Lord's blessing, support, and wisdom to help each of us be and do the best we can to support others.

The following day, 11am was all the things I said it would be but it was different. It was different because I knew I wasn't alone at that point. It wasn't all mine to manage, for that very moment all those faces I spoke to in Birdingbury the day before were there with me, praying for it to go well, perhaps excited for me too. And, at the precise time, as well as taking comfort from the fact that I was being supported by our village community, I liked the thought that I had much more powerful support and guidance too.

Matt Markham

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4th March: Don't forget Church Café Walk (meet at 11.30am in the lychgate) and Lunch (from 12.30 - 2pm) to raise funds for The Alzheimer's Society (see Birdsong).

Bob Munro and (some of!) his family's long connections with Birdingbury Church

Following his funeral at St. Leonard's, Bob Munro was buried alongside generations of his family in Birdingbury Churchyard. To the right of the path near the lychgate, there are memorial inscriptions to several generations of his family.

William Munro (d. 1887) and his wife, Elizabeth (d. 1891). Walter Munro (d. 1908) and his wife, Selina (d. 1898). Selina Amy, known as Lena, (d. 1908) died at a very young age (Hers is the small cross on a pedestal, with the inscription '“Lena”, Jesus loves me'). William Munro (d. 1955) and his wife, Amy (d.1947) (Theirs is the one with a birdbath inside the edge stones). Many of these graves are marked with an inscribed headstone and, unusually, a footstone too.
Rest in peace alongside your many ancestors, Bob.

AW

Special services in LENT

Ash Wednesday 1st March, is the first day of Lent. There is service of Holy Communion with Ashing at 7.30 pm at Princethorpe. On this day the previous year's palm crosses are burnt to ash, which is then used to make the sign of the cross on each person's forehead after communion or blessing.

Every Monday in Lent at 7 pm, Revd. Ali will lead a Compline service in one of the benefice churches, as follows:

Mon 6th March at St. Leonard's

Mon 13th March at St. Peter's, Bourton

Mon 20th March at St. Nicholas, Frankton

Mon 27th March at All Saints', Stretton

Monday 3rd April at St. Leonard's

Monday 10th April at St. Peter's Bourton

Compline is a quiet, contemplative service that lasts 30 minutes. It is an opportunity for a short time of peace and reflection during the 6 weeks of Lent.

This year's Lent course will be based on the Church of England's Pilgrim resources (www.pilgrimcourse.org). Each Tuesday evening at 7.15pm or Wednesday morning at 10.15pm in Lent we will enjoy light refreshments, conversation and an opportunity to talk about what Christians believe. It is open to all, whether you have a faith, not sure what you believe, are wondering what Christianity is all about or just enjoy good coffee! For further information contact Revd. Ali on 01788 812914/07837124509 or reverendalimassey@gmail.com

Palm Sunday, 9th April, will include a walk to St Leonard's Church from the war memorial following our resident donkeys.

The next week is Holy Week, including Good Friday events on 14th April and Communion services in the Benefice on Easter Sunday which is 16th April this year.

Easter music concerts - for listeners and singers

I have discovered four wonderful concerts of Easter music in our area: J. S. Bach's 'St. Matthew Passion', his 'St. John Passion' and John Stainer's 'Crucifixion'. Two of these are 'Come and Sing' events, where you rehearse the piece during the day and then perform it in the evening (great fun, I can assure you). For me, hearing this music is an unmissable part of Easter: it is the drama of the Easter story brought to life in a most evocative way.

Bach St. Matthew Passion Sunday, 26th March 2017,
3pm at Butterworth Hall, Warwick Arts Centre, University of Warwick
Armonico Consort and Orchestra
Conductor: Christopher Monks, Evangelist: Ian Bostridge
Tickets: Box Office 02476 524524, www.warwickartscentre.co.uk

Come & Sing' Stainer's Crucifixion Saturday, 8th April 2017
St Nicholas Church, High Street, Kenilworth
Afternoon rehearsal at 4.30pm (please bring a picnic tea)
Evening performance at 7.00pm (No charge)
Contact: Patsy Howes, p.howes41@btinternet.com or 07747 046374

Bach St John Passion Good Friday, 14th April, 6.00pm at Coventry Cathedral
Saint Michael's Singers and English Symphony Orchestra
Conductor, Paul Leddington Wright
Tickets: tickets@saintmichaelssingers.org and 01676 532436

"Bring and Sing' Stainer's Crucifixion Good Friday 14th April at All Saints Church,
Leamington Spa CV31 1AA
All Saints Church Choir, conductor Simon Tayton
Registration 3.30pm for rehearsal at 4pm.
Cost: £7.50 /£5 concs (+ Music hire £1.50 if needed). Singers please wear black.
Performance 6.30pm. Audience free admission, with retiring collection for Friends
of All Saints Music.
Booking: 01926 429169

Aileen Withington

St. Leonard's contact information

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