

CHURCH NEWS AND VIEWS

Movers and Shakers (or ... who does what) at St. Leonard's

As it is almost time for the Annual Church Meeting (APCM), we think it is an appropriate time to let you hear from some of the people who play particular roles in the life of St. Leonard's.

From Bryan Tompkins, who plays for services

'Too slow! Too fast! Too loud! Too soft! Too bad!'

I play the organ, but I'm not an organist. I play the piano, but I'm not a pianist. You see my abilities are quite limited and fall far short of the professional. However, I seek to use the gifts I have and by and large enjoy sitting at the organ. I'm not quite at the Les Dawson stage, but at my age I sometimes forget the key I'm playing and this leads to the occasional discord, which usually stimulates the memory and enables me to return to the right key! Those who attend church will also be aware that I'm quite capable of missing out a verse or adding an extra one!

Over the years I've discovered how to write music along with appropriate words.

A recent driving awareness course has made me aware of the importance of concentration and I'm trying hard to apply this to my organ playing. Hope you notice!

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From Brian Lloyd, who oversees the church as a building

'Just Bricks and Mortar'

My particular job within the PCC is to help look after the fabric of our lovely church. Such things as tiles off the roof, broken locks, cracks and subsidence as well as entry security have all been items to contend with.

This year is going to be real fun as we have to arrange a diocesan approved architect to undertake a once every five year inspection (known as The Quinquennial) which will result in some mandatory work. Also it is the year for our electrical inspection as required for health and safety regulations.

We are also trying to get ready all the necessary permissions to provide a loo within the church, together with a small kitchenette or servery. This last little problem requires what is called a Faculty – an experience of supreme ecclesiastical bureaucracy which has to be experienced to be believed!

From Eira Owen, Chair of the Altar Guild, our group of brass cleaners and flower arrangers

‘Say it with flowers and Brasso’

The Altar Guild was established many, many years ago. Right from the start of this long-standing organisation with its ancient (or quirky!) title, volunteers have given their time, energy and creativity to help St. Leonard’s to look loved, cared for and alive.

Rarely do people see the hustle and bustle behind the scenes. Every week someone arranges flowers on a pedestal by the altar, someone else makes sure that the church brasses are shiny and the church is clean. In addition Jackie changes the hangings and the altar linen when necessary.

My part as chairperson is just to oversee and co-ordinate these activities, ring or call on Guild members to help with a wedding or church festival at St. Leonard’s. It’s a chance to be creative, share time in church with others and make a small difference for those who visit our church.

I mustn’t forget to plug our annual (very short) AGM followed by a ‘Thank you’ supper for our volunteers. This year it is on Tuesday 21st April in the Club lounge. If you would like to join us then please give me a call on 632876 or drop in at Thurlby, Main Street. We would love to welcome you to our band of helpers.

(More contributions on this theme in next edition—Ed.)

<p>St. Leonard’s news and updates from Dick and Karen, church wardens</p>
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We have been in an interregnum for over a year now and still there is no new incumbent in sight. You may be wondering why; after all replacing someone in most organisations is pretty straightforward.

The fact is that so much in the Church of England is presently ‘under review’ that it makes the question of ‘what do we want’ quite difficult to answer with confidence. Reviews of clergy recruitment, training and potential accreditation of laity, the structure and practicalities of multi-parish benefices and rural ministry are all currently underway. Unfortunately we in Birdingbury tick almost all of these boxes!

So what do we want? Well, if we have a full time priest for our benefice it will cost about £55,000 p.a. of which our Birdingbury’s contribution would be an extra £720 a month. This is a huge increase in what we have paid historically and is perhaps unrealistic.

So there are at least two other options:

The first is that we look for a part-time priest-in-charge. This is not as easy as you might imagine. Priests completing their training are now often younger and most are looking for full time positions.

The second is that we look for another non-stipendiary minister but they are very few and far between these days. However this doesn't rule out being a possibility.

There is no clergy house in the benefice at present but the Diocesan Parsonages Committee is 'actively searching' on our behalf. Finding a suitable property in the right price range in one of our villages is proving difficult.

All this is causing us to think more radically about what we might do. We have proved that we can manage effectively without a priest, but it is a lot of work which falls mostly on a few shoulders. What we feel we are missing is leadership and, in particular, spiritual leadership. We have a strong belief that an interregnum is not a good time to stand still. Therefore we have re-organised our service pattern and are now introducing more informal services using modern worship hymns and songs which might appeal more to some people and families. Our launch recently of a new Saturday afternoon service attracted over 60 people from across the benefice.

Numbers involved in the life of St Leonard's are not the be all and end all, but at the end of the day they are pretty important. We are not growing and feel sure that God wants us to do so. We need to make some urgent and big decisions about the role of St. Leonard's as a building, as a place of worship and out in the community of Birdingbury.

Please come to talk to us: we need to know your views.

Karen and Dick

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Lent Reflections and study

It's been really good to have three quiet reflective sessions during Lent. They have all been different but have each provided space to 'find God' in our busy lives. Readings, music, candles and reflective literature have provided good 'food for thought' and even just 30 minutes gives time for quiet, peaceful thoughts. Thanks to those who have led them for us.

We have also had a 6 week course which followed the programme 'Praise Him' produced by Yorke Courses. Around 14 people enjoyed weekly stimulating sessions listening to audio interviews with Archbishop Justin Welby, Sister Wendy Beckett and David Suchet followed by engaging in informal discussion afterwards. Thanks to Margaret Francis for hosting these sessions.

APRIL and MAY SERVICES in Draycote Benefice Churches				
Date	Place	Time	Service	Readings
Thurs 2 April Maundy Thurs	Stretton	7.30 pm	Holy Communion & Vigil	
Fri 3 April Good Friday	Stretton Frankton	11.00 am 2.00 pm	Hot Cross Bun Service Good Friday Devotions	
Sun 5 April Easter Day	Birdingbury Frankton Bourton Stretton	9.15 am 9.15 am 10.30 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion + Egg Hunt Holy Communion BCP Holy Communion Holy Communion	<i>1 Corinthians Ch. 15 v1-11</i> <i>St. John Ch. 20 v 1—18</i>
Sun 12 April	Stretton	10.30 am	Benefice Family Communion	
Sun 19 April	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>1 John Ch. 3 v 1—7</i> <i>St. Luke Ch. 24 v 36b— 48</i>
Sun 26 April	Birdingbury Stretton	10.30 am 6.00 pm	Morning Praise Holy Communion	<i>1 John Ch. 3 v 16—end</i> <i>St. John Ch. 10 v 11—18</i>
Sun 3 May	Frankton Bourton Stretton	9.15 am 10.30 am 6.00 pm	Holy Communion BCP Holy Communion Evening Worship	
Sun 10 May Rogation	Bourton	10.30 am	Benefice Rogation Service	<i>1 John Ch. 5 v 1—6</i> <i>St. John Ch. 15 v 9—17</i>
Sun 17 May	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>1 John Ch. 5 v 9—13</i> <i>St. John Ch. 17 v 6—19</i>
Sun 24 May Pentecost	Birdingbury Stretton	10.30 am 6.00 pm	Morning Praise Holy Communion	<i>Romans Ch. 8 v 22—27</i> <i>St. John Ch. 15 v 26,27 and Ch. 16 v 4b—15</i>
Sun 31st May	Stretton	10.30 am	Benefice Communion	

Letter from Rev Graham Hardwick, one of our visiting priests

Recent news stories have included three-parent embryos, assisted-dying, a tiny spacecraft landing on a comet and violent storms on Vanuatu.

Soon we shall enjoy spring once again. For many of us this brings the promise of new life from apparently dead seed. Lambing too is always a joy to see, as is the fledging of this year's young birds. My particular love is the return of the butterflies and dragonflies.

Set against all this is the ongoing pain of Ebola-hit Africa, the ongoing tragedies in Northern Nigeria, Iraq, Syria & Ukraine. So many ordinary, amazing and unique lives wasted as ever on the altar of our all too common inhumanity to each other.

It was into all this that some 2000 years ago Jesus carried his cross (and ours!) and was crucified. They sought to silence Him and, of course, still do. No more prayers at council meetings, or parliament? No wearing of religious symbols at work, especially a cross? We have seen the barbaric destruction of ancient historic sites, especially Nineveh. Into all this darkness that so clouds human history, our Lord calls out "Destroy this temple and in three days it will be rebuilt!"

Next comes Easter: God's will be done.

Human creativity has always the potentiality for both good and evil. BUT we are intelligent life. We are responsible agents of our actions and inactions. The blessings brought about by our godly use of our God-given talents are beyond counting. We cannot circle the wagons, build walls of separation or act like a modern King Cnut (Canute) and attempt to stop the tide of progress and creativity. It is our response to God's call to us to live. BUT we have to learn the lessons that Holy Week and Easter would teach us. We must seek always and in all things to be a blessing, not a curse. We cannot claim to love God whom we cannot see if we fail to love our neighbours who we have no excuse for failing to see.

God bless you as you seek to be God's blessing to others.

Graham (Hardwick)

Please feel free to contact us, your churchwardens Dick or Karen, anytime if you would like to talk to us. If you would like to talk with a priest, we will happily put you in touch with one. Our contact details are on p. 8 of Church News.

Sophia Parriss Taffs, the daughter of Lucy Bostock and Dominic Taffs, was baptised at St. Leonard's on 22nd February in front of a large gathering of family and friends.

The funeral of **Allan Joseph Marshall**, of Mill House Farm, took place at St. Leonard's Church in front of a large congregation on 11th March. Our condolences to Jean, Keith, John and family.

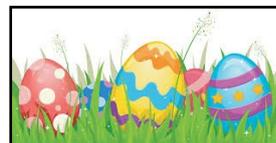
Our thoughts and prayers are with Jenny Hawes, her sister and their families following the death of their mother, **Audrey Billings**.

St. Leonard's events for April and May

Easter Sunday , 5th April – Service at 9.15 am followed by Easter Egg hunt

Please join us for a service with joyful hymns and Holy Communion to celebrate the resurrection of our blessed Lord. The service will be led by Reverend David Shaw.

There will be an Easter Egg hunt in the churchyard after the service – for children of all ages!



The Annual Church Meeting (APCM) is on 22nd April at 7.30pm in church

Everyone is very welcome to attend: **it is *your* church in *your* community.**

If you do not usually receive a copy of the report and would like one, please get in touch. (Dick 632644)

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Advance notice:



Church Fete: Saturday 4th July in the churchyard

Books, tombola, raffle, plants and refreshments. Please come and support your village church and spend time with friends and neighbours at the same time.

Benefice events for April and May

Good Friday 3rd April 2015

Family activity workshop for Easter from 9.30am at Stretton Village Hall followed by a **'Hot Cross Bun' service**.

This will be a 45 minute, informal service suitable for all ages at 11.00 am and led by Karen at All Saint's, Stretton.

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St. George's Lunch

at The Friendly Inn, Frankton
on Tuesday 21st April 12 noon for 12.30 pm
£8.00
Contact Margaret Francis on 01926 632918

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| Thurs 2 April | 2.30 pm | Service and Tea , Bourton, Frankton Village Hall |
| Wed 8 April | 10.30 am | Home Communion at Jackie Westcott's, Loen, Main St, |
| Thurs 9 April | 2.30 pm | Holy Communion at Princethorpe |
| Sat 25 April | 3.45 pm | Informal all-age service , Bourton and Frankton Village Hall |
| Thurs 30 April | 10.30 am | Coffee and Chat in The Birbury |
| Thurs 5 May | 2.30 pm | Election Day: NO Service and Tea at Village Hall |
| Wed 13 May | 10.30 am | Home Communion at Jenny Hawes', Gables House, Back Lane |
| Thurs 14 May | 2.30 pm | Ascension Day Communion at Princethorpe |
| Sat 23 May | 3.45 pm | Informal all-age service , Bourton, Frankton, Village Hall |
| Thurs 28 May | 10.30 am | Coffee and Chat in The Birbury |



A very Happy Easter to you all



St. Leonard's contact information

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