

The LINK

30p

April 2016



The Parish Church of St Michael Braintree
www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk



My dear Friends

I can't claim to be the most avid reader of the Diocesan newspaper *The Month*, but in the March issue my eye was caught by the 'Archdeacon's View' column on the front page and the smiling face of our own Archdeacon Robin King.

You can read Archdeacon Robin's article for yourselves, but basically it's about the relative merits of being right and being together. In marriage, for instance, Robin thinks there are no arguments worth winning. (I heard something rather similar the other day. Question: when has a conflict been resolved? Answer: when everyone's happy because they got their own way.)

Robin says he tends "to [lean] towards 'being together' over 'being right'." He may have been influenced in this by the recent experience he describes of filling in as the eighth man in a rowing crew as opposed to his normal solo rowing in a scull. He "suddenly had to submit to what everyone else wanted to do and the way they wanted to do it." However, this line of argument is rather confusing, because if I learned anything from my three years of what I would call 'dedicated mediocrity' in rowing at university, it is that in a rowing eight being right and being together are certainly not opposites, but more or less the same thing!

When it comes to controversy between professing Christians, I am wary of an approach which is based on 'what feels nicer'. There's plenty of disagreement around at the moment, most especially in the area of sexual ethics. In 2014 the Archbishops' Council produced a booklet called *Grace and Disagreement: Shared Conversations on Scripture, Mission and Human Sexuality*. The 'shared conversations' referred to are now taking place, and we had a report back at a recent Diocesan Synod meeting. (For this purpose Chelmsford Diocese is paired with London.) Delegates spoke of an overwhelming desire to stay together, and whereas the phrase 'good disagreement', much loved by the Archbishop of Canterbury, has now become commonplace, I was somewhat startled when I

heard of 'the beauty of disparity'. I've always thought of disparity as a bad thing, something that needs to be resolved or removed, or – it is only an 'apparent disparity' – explained. But enjoyed as something beautiful? Not in my understanding of the word.

I completely agree with Archdeacon Robin about the importance of one's accepting that one might be wrong about something, and we should listen carefully and respectfully to other people's views and arguments – none of that talking over the top of each other of which we hear far too much on the radio. I would go so far as to say that there are secondary issues on which Christians are at liberty to disagree, and there is no harm in their doing so. But I am very wary of 'conversations' which seem set to go on indefinitely.

Two Bible passages that come to my mind are:

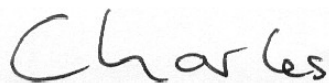
I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgement (*1 Corinthians 1.10*).

and

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind (*Philippians 2.1, 2*).

The philosophy of the Shared Conversations approach, I fear, gives inadequate weight to these scriptural exhortations, which imply that there is truth which it is our job to recognise and agree on as the firmest foundation for Christian unity. The history of extended dialogue suggests that once again the movement will be all one way: towards the retreat and ultimate defeat of the traditional and conservative point of view. The revisionists never give up, and in the end those who disagree with them surrender through sheer exhaustion.

Your sincere friend and Vicar

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

PCC Meeting 17 March

Lin Terris led a time of prayer, based on Luke Luke 8.22-25 (Jesus calms the storm).

Sue Marriott was appointed as **Safeguarding Rep** for Children.



David Henfrey presented the **Treasurer's Report**. Work on the 2015 accounts was not yet complete. Based on 2 months, the deficit for 2016 might be £19-20k. David also reported that we had received our first payment (£145) for solar electricity.

Lin Terris gave the **Evangelism Group** report, outlining plans for the Queen's 90th birthday 11/12 June celebration. A budget of £600 from the Training and Outreach Fund was agreed.

There was a discussion of the planned **Thanks and Thanksgiving Weekend 14/15 May**. This would include an appeal for people to review and hopefully increase their regular giving to the church, and would also include **24 hours of continuous prayer**.

Charles reported on behalf of the CHIP Group that **Street Visitation** would start in the week beginning 16 May. The group had also started to look at training needs, and Charles announced dates for the training of lesson readers and prayer leaders.

John Turton reported on **Deanery Synod**, which had discussed mission priorities within the Deanery; diocesan grants were available for suitable projects. Charles reported on **Diocesan Synod**, where the main presentation was on the **new Common Fund scheme**. The Synod approved the proposals. There was also a presentation on the role of church schools in the Government's Academy plans.

The next scheduled PCC meeting is on 14 April.

Charles Mason

MISSION OF THE MONTH BARNABAS FUND

The news in recent months has been dominated by the plight of Syrian refugees fleeing war, violence and poverty. But did you know that those who have been worst affected are our fellow Christians? Islamist militants are targeting Christian families, not only in Syria but throughout the Middle East, driving them from their homes, dispossessing them of their land and property, holding them as human shields and executing them for their faith in Christ. Indeed ***there are signs that this is the decade in which Christianity in the Middle East will be finally wiped out by emigration driven by persecution. The region will be poorer for their loss. In 1900 Christians made up 20% of the population of the Middle East. Now the figure is less than 5%***

In the midst of such appalling hardship, Barnabas Fund is providing food and basic needs to Christians in many parts of the Middle East. Working through their partner organisations on the ground, Barnabas Fund ensures that this

much-needed aid reaches desperate Christians. They provide monthly food parcels, powdered milk for children, hygiene essentials, clothes, health assistance, cooking utensils, blankets, mattresses, and shelter. With every aid parcel comes a message of love from the outside world, a lifeline to a people in despair.

This is just one example of the work of Barnabas Fund in helping persecuted Christians around the world by providing material and spiritual support in response to needs identified by local Christian leaders.





A Christian Syrian family in Aleppo

Please visit the Barnabas Fund display in the Welcome Area this month to find out more about the work of Barnabas Fund in the Middle East and elsewhere and join me in praying for persecuted and marginalised Christians around the world.

Harsha Mason (Barnabas Fund Rep)



THANK YOU

Margrit and family would like to thank all friends at St Michaels for their prayers and support during Greg's illness and since his death, and for the many cards and donations received.

Many thanks to all who attended the Thanksgiving Service. A special thank you to Charles and all those who contributed towards the service and refreshments to make it such a fitting and memorable occasion.

Your continuing prayers and support are much appreciated.
With our love

Margrit Strathearn and family

QUITTING IS NOT AN OPTION

God can work good things out of bad things if we trust him.

If you can learn how to do the right things while you are hurting, and you do it long enough, there is no devil in hell who can keep you from the palace.

We have to learn to do what is right when we are hurting, we have to do it as if we were not hurting.

We have to own our behaviour and take responsibility for it.

We have the fruit of self-control.

Control our mouth when we are hurting.

Stop feeling sorry for yourself.

Don't believe God is mad about a forgiven sin.

You can trust God to give you the very best for you.

Do good to as many people as you can, the devil hates this.

When you are hurting keep your commitments.

Get honour back!

Hang on to your integrity.

Psalm 91:2

I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and fortress, my God in whom I trust.'

1 Peter 2:23

When they hurled their insults at him [Christ], he did not retaliate; when he suffered he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

Peter Schaad

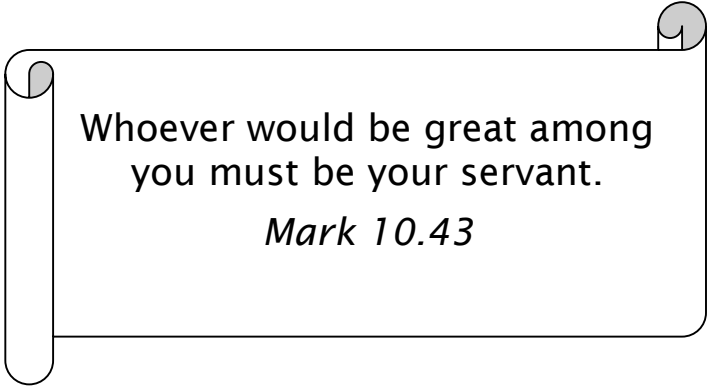
LADIES GROUP

Our secretary, Helen, transported us on holiday to Canada in March when she showed us a wonderful presentation of her trip. Helen and her husband David experienced many forms of transport starting with the flight from Heathrow to Calgary, a cable car (called a Gondola in Canada), the Brewster Mountain bus, steam trains, a cruise on a large ship , and a 'Tracey Arm Cruise' (a smaller ship), helicopter, a sled ride, bus, and an evening Safari. They saw goats, black bears, harbour seals, huskies, whales, moose, chipmunks, Canada geese, and butterflies. The stunning scenery included many waterfalls and mountains, icebergs and glaciers, and also a visit to Whistler.

Our next meeting is on 12 April, when Rev. John Robinson will be sharing Music from Old Essex with us; any ladies are welcome.

Maureen Woodward

VERSE OF THE YEAR 2016



Whoever would be great among
you must be your servant.

Mark 10.43

‘A CHILD MAY WADE IN IT...AN ELEPHANT MAY SWIM IN IT’

St John’s Gospel has often be described this way.

Why not come and wade or swim with us?

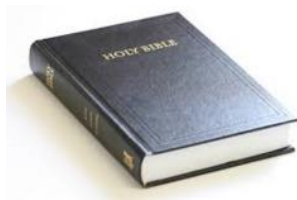
The Good Book College will be looking at John’s Gospel and the Letters of John on Monday evenings beginning on 18 April at 7.30pm in Church House.

As usual the course last 10 weeks, finishing on 4 July. (There will be two breaks for bank holidays).

If you are familiar with the Gospel of John, you will know it is nourishing. No doubt you have felt you would like to get into it further.

If so, please have a word with Jenny Chapman, Lin Terris or Stephen Bailey.

Stephen Bailey



THE FISHERMEN'S MISSION

2014/2015 Statistics - our key messages:

- Last year we helped 280 fishermen after emergencies at sea
- Last year we made 10744 home & hospital visits to fishermen and their families
- Last year we travelled 98,795 miles doing our work
- We helped fishermen access grants in excess of £1.1m
- Last year we visited 4,861 fishing boats and had meetings with 2,452 fishermen
- We conducted 291 funerals for fishing families
- Last year we responded to 17 fishing fatalities at sea and provided support to the families whilst continuing to support over 752 widows of fishermen
- 9 fishing boats were lost at sea over this period
- Helped 152 children of fishermen
- For every £1 generated we spend 88 pence delivering our services, providing a lifeline of welfare and support to fishermen and their families

Jack Green



Latest news on:

Ashers Baking Co.

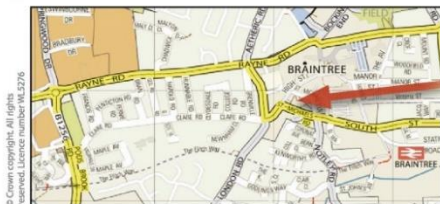
The McArthur family, owners of Ashers Baking Company in Northern Ireland, are appealing a judge's decision to fine them for refusing to produce a pro-gay marriage campaign cake. We will talk about the work of our Legal Defence Fund, which is backing the McArthur family.

Gospel freedom

Christian youth work and evangelism are being threatened by the Government's extremism policy. Ofsted could be allowed to ban holiday Bible clubs which fail the 'British values' test. New laws restricting free speech could jeopardise Gospel freedom. Come along and find out more.

Sanctity of life

The Bible upholds the sanctity of every human life regardless of how young, old, able-bodied or disabled that life might be. Yet the practice of abortion is widespread in Britain and there are continued calls for assisted suicide to be legalised. We will bring you the latest developments.



Braintree

7.30pm - 9.00pm Tuesday 19 April 2016

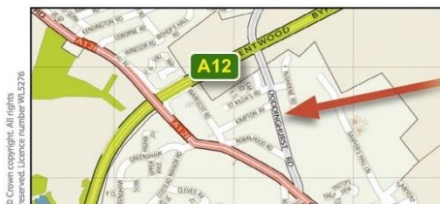
St Michaels Church,

St Michaels Road, Braintree, Essex, CM7 1EX

Contact: Cyril Bamforth 01376 328406



Braintree railway station – 0.3 miles



Brentwood

8.00pm - 9.30pm Wednesday 20 April 2016

Doddinghurst Road Community Church,

56-60 Doddinghurst Road, Brentwood,

Essex, CM15 9EH

Contact: Julie Bower 01277 224528



An induction loop will operate at Braintree.

Speaking at the meeting will be
Development Officers James McIntosh
and Benjamin Mitchell



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APRIL DIARY

2 Saturday

8-10am SuMMiT Prayer Breakfast – Church House

3 Sunday 2nd of Easter

8.00am Holy Communion – Revd Charles Mason

10.00am Church Family Worship – The vine and the grapes –
Joel Wicks

5.15pm Evening Prayer – Jesus Chapel –
Stephen & Jennifer Bailey

6.30pm Evening Worship – Good out of evil –
Cyril Bamforth

8.00pm Prayer Meeting – Jesus Chapel

4 Monday

7.30pm Bell Ringing

8.00pm Badminton

6 Wednesday ELECTORAL ROLL REVISION ENDS

10.00am Holy Communion – Revd Charles Mason

7.25pm Elders – Church House

8.00pm Bible Study Groups: Lifebuilder, Notley Road

8.30pm SuMMiT – Wetherspoons, Fairfield Road

7 Thursday

2.15pm Women's Fellowship

7.30pm Standing Committee – 10a Marshalls Road

8.00pm Carry on Exploring Bible Study

10 Sunday 3rd of Easter

8.00am Holy Communion – Tom St John-Coleman

10.00am Morning Worship – Friend of sinners, Lord of the
Sabbath – John Turton

6.30pm Holy Communion – Justice and love –
Revd Stephen Bailey

7.30pm Focus

11 Monday

- 12.15pm Spotlight
- 2.30pm CFW Planning Group – 10a Marshalls Road
- 5.30pm 4th Braintree Beavers
- 7.30pm Bell Ringing
- 7.30pm Good Book College
- 8.00pm Badminton

12 Tuesday MAY LINK SUBMISSION DUE

- 1.15pm Tiddlywinks
- 8.00pm Ladies Group

13 Wednesday

- 9:45am Meeting Point Bible Study
- 6.30pm 4th Braintree Cubs & Scouts
- 7.30pm Prayer Supper – Church House
- 8.00pm Bible Study Groups: Lifebuilder, Notley Road

14 Thursday

- 2.15pm Women's Fellowship
- 3.30pm ASK
- 7.30pm PCC – Church House

15 Friday

- 5.30pm 4th Braintree Beavers, Cubs & Scouts

17 Sunday 4th of Easter

- 8.00am Holy Communion – John Turton
- 10.00am Holy Communion – Followers and apostles –
Revd Charles Mason
- 4.00pm Newcomers Tea (by invitation) – Church House
- 6.30pm Evening Worship – The servant our substitute –
Revd Charles Mason
- 7.30pm Focus
- 8.00pm Prayer Meeting – Jesus Chapel

18 Monday

- 12.15pm Spotlight
- 5.30pm 4th Braintree Beavers
- 7.30pm Bell Ringing
- 7.30pm Good Book College
- 8.00pm Badminton

19 Tuesday

- 1.15pm Tiddlywinks
7.30pm Christian Institute meeting – Church (see page 12)

20 Wednesday

- 6.30pm 4th Braintree Cubs & Scouts
7.25pm Elders – Church House
8.00pm Bible Study Groups: Lifebuilder, Notley Road,
Chestnut Grove

21 Thursday

- 2.30pm Holy Communion – The Hawthorns
3.30pm ASK
8.00pm Carry on Exploring Bible Study

22 Friday

- 2.30pm Bradbury House Service – Lin Terris
5.30pm 4th Braintree Beavers, Cubs & Scouts

24 Sunday 5th of Easter

- 8.00am Holy Communion – Revd Stephen Bailey
10.00am Morning Worship – Whose side are you on? –
Roger Cooke
6.30pm Evening Worship – The giver of life –
John Turton
7.30pm Focus

25 Monday

- 12.15pm Spotlight
5.30pm 4th Braintree Beavers
7.30pm Good Book College
8.00pm Bell Ringing
8.00pm Badminton

26 Tuesday

- 1.15pm Tiddlywinks
10.00am CHIP Group – Church House
7.30pm Lesson Reader Training – Church

27 Wednesday

9:45am Meeting Point Bible Study
6.30pm 4th Braintree Cubs & Scouts
7.30pm Annual Meetings – Church House

28 Thursday

2.15pm Women's Fellowship
3.30pm ASK
8.00pm Carry on Exploring Bible Study

29 Friday

5.30pm 4th Braintree Beavers, Cubs & Scouts
7.30pm Flower Club

30 Saturday

7.30pm Joel & Jonathan Wicks and band in concert –
Church

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms

6 March Hannah Sharpe

Funerals

16 March Gregory ('Greg') Strathearn (67)

GARDENING TIPS

The chilli plants in the house are now starting to look for more space. So over the next couple of weeks, the greenhouse will go out, larger pots found and a gentle re-pot. In the same process I will be feeding them with some nice organic plant food. In not growing from seed they should be able to fruit quicker and be more resilient to any stresses they encounter.



I have heard this week that runner beans are perennials in their native habitat so maybe one to look at for next year. It is a good time now to plant new beans and keep them warm so that they germinate. Originally runner beans were introduced into gardens for their flower not their food. So think about using them to decorate alongside other flowering plants.

The lawns this month would benefit from a feed and the removal of weeds and moss. This can be tackled with either specialist weed/feed, or manual weeding and raking. The advantage of the latter approach is that it doesn't damage naturalised bulbs or use chemicals and can keep you very fit.

Look out for garden guests: hedgehogs, robins, and ladybirds are great at devouring unwanted bugs, slugs and snails. So create a space in the garden for them to live. A good collection of unwanted cuttings, leaves and odd pieces of wood does wonders.



Dave Marriott



PASS IT ON

It's often been said that if it were up to us the Christian faith would only ever be one generation from potentially dying out. Thankfully God is gracious in helping us, and this has not happened. However the thought remains challenging; who are we telling about Jesus and who are we encouraging to live as His disciples? If we don't do these things then what will our community look like in 10, 20, 30 years' time? Perhaps more worryingly, what would the lives of our children and grandchildren look like when they are older if we don't actively pass on our faith to them?

The Bible has a lot to say about the importance of passing on our faith; here are some examples:

Deuteronomy 11:18-19:

“Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”

Matthew 28:19-20:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

2 Timothy 2:2:

“And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

So passing on our faith should be a priority for Christians; from parents and grandparents to children and from experienced Christians to newer Christians. The Bible tells us that parents have the primary responsibility to teach their children from the Bible and not 'professionals' like me (although I try my best to encourage their faith also).

The strongest influence on the life of a child is the example and teaching of their parents. So make Bible reading a priority in your home; take 10 minutes or more after dinner to read part of the Bible and chat about what it means. Pray each day with your children; at the dinner table and before bed. The patterns set in childhood can have life changing effects; a small investment of time now can bless your children for eternity. If you are not sure how to get started have a look at the resources below or come and chat to me for some ideas.

What about those who don't have children at home? Their responsibilities are just as great. Paul's idea of 'faithful men' and 'others' was not limited to church employees; actually he means people like you! Leaders are to pass on faith to reliable people who will themselves pass on the good news of Jesus Christ faithfully to others. You are part of God's plan to make disciples! Even if you feel you are not gifted at teaching and have little Bible knowledge you can be an encourager of other Christians. So I encourage you; invite someone over for a cup of tea or meal and share stories of God's faithfulness to you. If you don't already you could go to a Bible study group to encourage others and for others to encourage you. Charles and I are also always looking for suitable volunteers for a wide variety of ministries at St Michaels where you can contribute to our mission of 'knowing Christ and making Him known'. Each of us has a role to play in the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19; which can also be translated 'as you are going, make disciples...' So as you are going through life who are you passing your faith on to?

Things to prayerfully ponder:

- How can I further encourage the faith of my children/grandchildren?
- Who could I encourage in their journey of faith?
- Who can I tell about Jesus who is not yet His follower?
- What skills can I pass on to the next generation of disciples?

Family Bible Resources:

Table talk (family Bible reading plan):

<https://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/daily-bible-reading/table-talk/>

‘Short steps for long gains’ family Bible devotions:

<https://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/daily-bible-reading/family/short-steps-for-long-gains-family-edition>

The Jesus Storybook Bible (Bible stories for under 10s):

<https://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/bibles/children-bible/jesus-storybook-bible>

Joel Wicks

BELFRY BULLETIN

Under the watchful eye of our new Guild Master, Bradley Hill, we have continued with our regular service and practice ringing. He has had us lowering and raising the bells and even organised our version of the 3 Tenors, with Richard, Phil and Gareth as our stars. On one occasion we rang with 2 Trebles and 1 Tenor [we are working on the stage show]. Saw in our log book an 'HOORAY' after a note that we rang all 10 bells for a Sunday service. That was very pleasing.



We had to change the rope on the 7th bell as it broke when Lin was ringing it; no, she did not pull too hard it was just natural wear. Bradley and Phil soon put on a new rope, so all is well.

For the 6.30pm service on Sunday 28 February, Di Carpenter 1, Vicky LeFevre 2, Alastair Donaldson 3, Roy Threadgold 4, Peter Smith 5, David Hengeli 6, Bradley Hill 7 and Maurice Downs 8[c] rang 1344 changes in 46mins of Plain Bob Major in memory of the life of our dear friend and supporter Greg Strathearn.

Prior to the service of Thanksgiving for Greg's life Clare Ould, Lin Ould, Marian Wood, Peter Wood, Peter Smith[c] and Richard Ould rang 720 very good changes of Plain Bob Doubles.

Peter Smith