

The LINK

30p

July 2016



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



My dear Friends

As I sit down to write my 185th and final monthly letter as Vicar of Braintree (for historical reasons that is actually my official title without the inclusion of ‘St Michael’), I naturally find myself drawn to the subject of change and moving on. The time of moving, generally acknowledged to be stressful, is often particularly so for clergy, as it typically involves a change of home *and* a change of job, rather than just one or the other. In my case there is also the transition from town ministry to village ministry, and from being full-time to part-time (no, I am not retiring).

These life events also tend to make us reflect on the passing of the years and the ageing process – maybe some of you remember my 50th birthday party in Church House, just two months or so after my arrival!

Of course I am also looking forward to the move, with its new challenges, new scenery and new people to get to know, and there would be something very wrong if I weren’t; but the fact is that I have spent longer in Braintree than anywhere else in my entire life, so of course I am going to miss it—and you—very much. These last few weeks I have found myself experiencing what might be termed “micro-bereavements” – last time I do that particular home visit, last meeting of this or that committee, last time I travel that road, last time I give communion to that person, etc. Once again I find myself quoting a couple of lines from the 1950s musical *Salad Days*:

Oh yes, it’s not that I want to stay,
It’s just that I don’t want to go.

The Bible, as always, has plenty to help us out in such situations: ‘moving on’ is a major Biblical theme. Admittedly, the first moving on, from the Garden of Eden, was the result of the fall of man, but it’s only a few chapters further on that we find that the

very first recorded words of God to Abraham, the founder of the Jewish nation, are: 'Go from your country and your kindred and you father's house...' (*Genesis 12.1*). David the shepherd boy is removed from the homely rural surroundings of Bethlehem to go and serve in the royal court (*1 Samuel 18.2*), and the text specifically says that Saul would not let him return to his father's house. Amos was a herdsman and fruit farmer, but was 'taken' from that by God and told to be a full-time prophet instead (*Amos 7.14,15*).

Turning to the New Testament, we find Galilean fishermen and a tax collector becoming itinerant apostles, and the apostle Paul knows it is his calling not to remain very long in any one place, but to preach Christ in new regions (*Romans 15.20,21*). I expect you know that weepy farewell scene in Acts 20, part of which I quoted in my letter last month, where Paul and the Ephesians say their last goodbyes.

Even these examples, however, do not do justice to the Bible's teaching about change. In truth if you are a Christian your whole life on earth is a journey, a pilgrimage to your eternal heavenly home, even if you have never moved from the house where you were born. As the writer to the Hebrews puts it: 'Here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come' (*Hebrews 13.14*). Moving on from one job, home, town, county, country or even continent to another is by comparison merely incidental.

What does *not* change, of course, is the creed we profess, the gospel by which we are saved, and Jesus Christ whom we love and seek to serve; he 'is the same yesterday and today and for ever' (*Hebrews 13.8*). That's something in which I rejoice for myself and for you as our ways, humanly speaking, part next month.

Your sincere friend and Vicar

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

LADIES GROUP

Mrs Sharon Gould came to speak to us about her daughter Heather, known as "H", who has Downs Syndrome. H was born in October 1976 to Sharon and her husband Bob, they already had one child, Adam. Sharon spoke frankly about her feelings towards her newly born daughter; about how she could not accept the fact that a child of hers had a disability. H had been premature and was consequently in the special care baby unit. Bob went to visit his daughter and persuaded Sharon to come with him; Sharon took one look at her daughter and the bond was made.

Sharon and Bob were determined that H would have as normal a life as possible. She joined the Brownies and as a family they went skiing, visited Disneyland and joined the Caravan Club. H enjoyed watching wrestling and snooker and has met Steve Davis.

In later years Sharon and Bob's younger daughter Vicky has taken H to many places including New York. H has a job at Tesco's, which she started initially as a work experience student, but is now an accepted member of staff. She has been in many different departments within the store. H lives independently as possible in her flat, and is engaged to Sean; they plan to marry this October.

Next month will be our annual summer meal.

Helen Kemp

WOMEN @ ST MICHAELS SUMMER MEDLEY

We had gifts of Tiptree Jam... but more than that we had an inspirational morning with many of us taking part. The morning was partly to thank Harsha for her contribution to Women @ St Michaels since we began in January 2008. We will miss her.



Harsha's talk was entitled '**A Closer Walk**' ,she used **Luke 24.13-35: The Road to Emmaus** as the focal point for her talk and as part of this introduced us to the **Caravaggio painting of the Supper at Emmaus**, making the following points for us:

- The Risen Jesus in the centre painted differently to our expectations signifying Jesus the same but different. His hand outstretched in blessing.

See the reaction of the two who met Jesus on the road:

- On the left we see one of the men jumping out of his seat in amazement: this really is the Risen Jesus he seems to be saying
- On the right we see the man with outstretched arms in the form of the crucifixion: this is Jesus who was crucified now raised.
See that he also is wearing a shell signifying that he is a pilgrim: one who is on a spiritual journey.
- The man in the background looking uninterested as do people in the world today.
- The shadow of the fish under the fruit bowl...the symbol for Christians in the early church.
- In the fruit bowl apples signifying the apple in the Garden of Eden and the fall.
- Also a pomegranate which is a symbol of the Resurrection.
- In the front right of the picture is a space for us to put ourselves and ask how we would have reacted to the Risen Jesus then and how he impacts our lives today.

There is available from Jennifer Bailey a copy of the handout we used with some added notes if anyone would like a copy to enable them to reflect further on 'A Closer Walk with God.'

Jennifer Bailey

CHURCH OPEN AFTERNOONS: SUNDAYS IN AUGUST

It is a while since we opened the church to the public during the day, and members of the congregation suggested we could do this again.

We are proposing opening on Sunday afternoons in August, between the two main services, from 12 noon to 6pm. We are asking pairs of people to sign up for 2 hour slots, to be available to welcome any visitors, and offer refreshments. There will be music playing, and at least one self-directed prayer activity each week.

It is noticeable since the new glass inner doors have been installed how many people pop in after a service just to look around or for a few minutes quiet reflection. We are hoping that Sunday afternoons, when many people are out for a stroll, or visitors sightseeing, will be a profitable time for this.

We will open for as many afternoons as we can cover, so please sign up if you can help.

The Evangelism group (Jonathan, Lin, Sue, Joel, Jenny, Louise)



St. Michael's C. of E. Primary School



Summer Fete

Friday 1 July
6-8pm

- Stalls
- Balloon Release
- Raffle
- Rides
- BBQ
- Entertainment

Please come along and join the fun!
See you there?



WANTED

YOU!

Church House cleaning team needs your help.

If two or three of you could commit to joining our cleaning team on Friday mornings, it would be very much appreciated. It may be that you are able to commit to a different day, this is also possible.

Please phone me or see me in church to find out more and join our team.

Frankie Winning

JULY DIARY

Full details of venues and contacts on Practical Information pages

1 Friday

6-8pm St Michael's School Fête (See page 9)

3 Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion – Revd Charles Mason

10.00am Church Family Worship with Baptism –

Together in unity – Revd Charles Mason

12.30pm Masons' farewell lunch (if booked) – Church House

5.15pm Evening Prayer – Jesus Chapel –

Can. John Turton

6.30pm Evening Worship – Up in heaven, down to earth –
Revd Charles Mason

7.30pm Focus

4 Monday

12.15pm Spotlight

5.30pm 4th Braintree Beavers

7.30pm Bell Ringing

7.30pm Good Book College

8.00pm Badminton

5 Tuesday

1.15pm Tiddlywinks

7.00pm Street Visitation

6 Wednesday

10.00am Holy Communion – Revd Stephen Bailey

6.30pm 4th Braintree Cubs & Scouts

8.00pm Bible Study Groups: Lifebuilder, Notley Road

7 Thursday

7.00pm SuMMiT – Beer, chat and curry – Wetherspoons,
Fairfield Road

8.00pm Carry on Exploring Bible Study

8 Friday

5.30pm 4th Braintree Beavers, Cubs & Scouts

10 Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion – Tom St John-Coleman

- 10.00am Morning Worship - The mustard seed...the storm –
John Turton
- 6.30pm Holy Communion – Ready for visitation? –
Revd Stephen Bailey
- 7.30pm Focus
- 8.00pm Prayer Meeting – Jesus Chapel
- 11 Monday**
- 12.15pm Spotlight
- 5.30pm 4th Braintree Beavers
- 7.30pm Bell Ringing
- 7.30pm Good Book College
- 7.30pm Evangelism Group – Church House
- 8.00pm Badminton
- 12 Tuesday**
- 1.15pm Tiddlywinks
- 7.00pm Street Visitation
- 8.00pm Ladies Group
- 13 Wednesday**
- 9:45am Meeting Point Bible Study
- 10.00am CFW Planning Group – 10 Parklands
- 6.30pm 4th Braintree Cubs & Scouts
- 8.00pm Bible Study Groups: Chestnut Grove, Lifebuilder,
Notley Road
- 14 Thursday**
- 3.30pm ASK
- 15 Friday**
- 5.30pm 4th Braintree Beavers, Cubs & Scouts
- 17 Sunday 8th after Trinity**
- 8.00am Holy Communion – Revd Sarah Hayward
- 10.00am Holy Communion – The demoniac and the pigs –
Roger Cooke
- 6.30pm Evening Worship – Church restoration –
Can. John Turton
- 7.30pm Focus

18 Monday

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

19 Tuesday AUGUST LINK SUBMISSION DUE

- 1.15pm Tiddlywinks
- 7.00pm Street Visitation

20 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,

21 Thursday

- 2.30pm Holy Communion – The Hawthorns
- 3.30pm ASK
- 7.30pm PCC
- 8.00pm Carry on Exploring Bible Study

22 Friday

- 9.30am St Michael's School end of year service
- 5.30pm 4th Braintree Beavers, Cubs & Scouts

24 Sunday 9th after Trinity

- 8.00am Holy Communion – Revd Stephen Bailey
- 10.00am Morning Worship – Illness cured, death defeated – Revd Stephen Bailey
- 6.30pm Evening Worship – Wising up – Cyril Bamforth
- 7.30pm Focus
- 8.00pm Prayer Meeting – Jesus Chapel

25 Monday

- 10-12 SMASH Club – Church House
- 7.30pm Bell Ringing
- 7.30pm Good Book College
- 8.00pm Badminton

26 Tuesday

10-12 SMASH Club – Church House
7.00pm Street Visitation

27 Wednesday

10-12 SMASH Club – Church House
7.25pm Elders – Church House
8.00pm Bible Study Groups: Lifebuilder, Notley Road,
Chestnut Grove

28 Thursday

10-12 SMASH Club – Church House
8.00pm Carry on Exploring Bible Study

29 Friday

10-12 SMASH Club – Church House
7.30pm Flower Club

31 Sunday 10th after Trinity

8.00am Holy Communion – Can. John Turton
10.00am SMASH Club Service ‘Mission Rescue’
6.30pm United Service – Cornerstone
(no service at St Michaels)
7.30pm Focus

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms

3 May Sam Allen (omitted from last month)
5 June Leo Henson

BELFRY BULLETIN

Since the last report of activities in the Belfry we have had six important events to record.

We took the opportunity of dedicating a Quarter Peal rung for the evening service on Sunday 17 March to the 90th Birthday of Queen Elizabeth II. 1260 changes of Grandsire Triples in 46mins Di Carpenter 1, Marian Wood 2, Vicky LeFevre 3, Pat Cresshull 4, Peter Wood 5, Andrew Taylor 6, Maurice Downs (c) 7, Ian Cresshull 8.



23 April 1250 Yorkshire Surprise Major in 45mins. Michael Hastings 1, Marian Wood 2, Jenny Hastings 3, Peter Wood 4, Roy Threadgold 5, Yvonne Towler 6, Maurice Downs 7, Jim Towler [c] 8. This was dedicated to the memory of Pat Cooke and all Guild Members wish to be associated with this Quarter Peal. The QP was also for St George's Day, 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, and 50th anniversary of Jenny Hastings (a past Braintree ringer), and was Roy Threadgold's 1st Peal.

GREAT NEWS at our practice night on 25 April, our Deputy Master, Debbie Hill, after 10 months with back problems and not being able to ring, took hold of a bell rope and rang. She's back.

The Civic Service to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday was held at St Michaels at 11am on Saturday 11 June. 180 changes of Plain Bob Minor was rung by Clare Gray 1, Debbie Hill 2, Lin Ould 3, Linda Ranby 4, Maurice Downs 5, and Bradley Hill 6. Ellie Gray and Richard Ould then joined to ring Rounds and Call Changes Major to include Queens. The Plain Bob was dedicated to the wedding of Alice Wylie and Christopher Smith (Peter Smith's son).

At the start of ringing for the open air service on Sunday 12 June the tenor rope broke, letting it ring uncontrolled for several minutes. Rounds and Call Changes on the front 8 bells and Plain Bob Minor on the front 6 preceded the service.

Before practice on 13 June Bradley Hill fitted another rope to the tenor bell, allowing us to ring all 10 bells. We will need some more ropes as we only have one spare left.

Peter Smith

THOUGHTS FOR CHRISTIANS

- Keep your hopes up.
- God is good and something good is going to happen to me today.
- Proverbs 15:30 – The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, and good news refreshes the bones.
- Hate the sin but love the sinner!
- If you want your prayers answered stop pointing the finger at other people and don't judge them.

Peter Schaad

TRANSLATIONS

I am fluent in German, French and Italian. If any member of the congregation needs something translating, please ask me; I would only be too happy to help.

Unless there are pages of it there would be no charge, although it would be nice if something could be put in the Offertory.

Peter Schaad

GARDENING TIPS

As we pass from June to July, I look back on the strawberries we harvested from the garden with a longing of just how much better they taste than those I have to purchase the rest of the year. Strawberries are fruit you cannot really freeze but just have to eat fresh.

The chillies are doing well and now growing a lot better. The added tomato food has lifted their spirits and now I see some good flowers appearing, so I expect the fruit to follow.

Elsewhere in the garden the lawn's looking good for the rain that has landed on it and a good regular mowing is helping the grass grow and keeping the weeds at bay. It has been a challenge to keep the dandelions at bay however prevention is a lot easier than clearing up. So keep an eye out for flowering weeds and make sure they are removed before they seed.

With regard to flowers, removing the flowered heads will encourage more flowers to appear. This works well with roses, aquilegias and even the humble pansy. This prevents the flower from turning its energy into producing seed and instead into more flowers.

The other key thing to remember is to look after the plants whilst the weather is hot or whilst you're away. If you can, keep them in shade when needed and possibly look at drip irrigation. You can get some simple devices that fit well to a 2-litre fizzy bottle that will help the plants for a few days as well as fixed to water mains solution. Both use less water than hosing or a water can, as they target exactly where it is needed.



Dave Marriot

UCCF SUMMER TEAM SERBIA 2016

This July, the UCCF London Team will join EUS, the Serbian Christian Union movement, to host an English and Bible Camp in Fuzine, Croatia. Will you partner with us?

WHO'S GOING?

TEAM LEADERS: UCCF Staff Workers James Bunyan and James Watts, Relay Worker Lydia Hiorns.

TEAM MEMBERS: Patrick Bokšan-Cullen, Sarah de Valmency, Gareth Evans, Grace Hopkins, Alice Larke, Katie Rhodes, Ranulph Steiger.

WHAT WILL WE BE DOING?

We are returning for a second year to help run an English and Bible camp with the Serbian equivalent of UCCF, 'Evandeosko Udruzenje Studenata' (EUS). Serbian Christian students bring their friends to practice their English and hear about Jesus. Camps like these are often a turning point for those who are investigating Jesus and are a time of growth and encouragement for the Christian students. The camp is part of a longer term partnership between London Christian Unions and EUS.

Before the camp begins, we will spend a few days in Belgrade meeting EUS staff, finalising plans for the camp and getting better acquainted with Serbian customs and culture. At the camp itself we will focus on sharing Jesus with Serbian students through English classes, from the Bible in daily meetings together, sharing cultures, and building friendships during free time and organised fun!

THE NEED

EUS has been experiencing wonderful student growth: some have been coming to faith, new students are joining the ministry, current students are growing in their faith and as leaders, and some graduates have become EUS staff. There is great breadth and creativity in the approach to reaching students, through bible studies, lectures, social events, coffee shop ministry, debates, conferences, seminars and camps.

The main challenge to the movement is the situation in Serbia: religious, political, financial, and social. There are very few churches and therefore little church support for the ministry. High unemployment combined with bureaucracy and corruption has led to Serbian students losing hope in their ability to forge a future for the country, and many are leaving as a result.

HOW CAN I BE INVOLVED?

Here are some specific ways to partner with us:

PRAY

We would really appreciate prayer in the following three areas:

PLANNING // pray for James, Lydia and James as they plan and prepare the camp programme with our Serbian colleagues.

UK TEAM // please ask God to teach us to depend on him prayerfully during the trip and pray for our team to be united in a way that shows Jesus to the Serbian students. Pray that team members would return home sharing God's love for the world, and that they would impact Christian Unions in London as a result.

THE CAMP // ask God to be at work in the hearts of those we will meet at the camp. Pray for Christian students as they invite their friends to come. Pray that Serbian students would come to know Jesus.

GIVE

Would you consider supporting the team financially? Each team member must raise £765 towards the overall cost of the trip. Even a small contribution would make a difference. For each team member, that's 30 people giving £25 each, enabling us to share Jesus with Serbian students, continue our partnership with the EUS, and have a far-reaching impact on Christian Unions in London. Could you be one of those people, and partner with us?

THANK YOU!

For considering partnering with us.
Look forward to hearing from you!