

The LINK

30p

December 2016



The Parish Church of St Michael Braintree

www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk

Special Christmas Events

@

St. Michaels

Sunday 11 December
4pm Carol Service at Braintree Football Club

Saturday 17 December
6pm 3 Wise Men and a Baby in Church House

Sunday 18 December
6.30pm Carol Service

Saturday 24 December
4pm Christingle
11.15pm Midnight Service and Communion

Christmas Day
8am Communion
10am Family service

No 6.30pm service

Dear Friends

A lady in an advert for a well-known super market looks up rather annoyed as she hears a Christmas song being played over the tannoy. She is annoyed because she has only just got the smell of bonfire night out of her hair and she is expected to think about Christmas already. Freeport shopping village turned on their Christmas light on 17 November and Braintree town centre lights went on on Saturday 19. Being the town centre church, in previous years we had opened the doors of St. Michael's to join in the celebration and welcome people in. This year it just seemed far too early.

Actually, I am not sure if the lights are referred to as "Christmas lights" in public places anymore. I know that singing Christmas carols was banned in one shopping centre on the grounds that they do not allow "political or religious" events. Surprisingly I also noted that they did not prevent the shops advertising their wares as "Christmas presents" or encouraging customers by opening later in the evenings in the run up to (yes, you've guessed it) "Christmas". Towards the end of the super market advert, the lady's husband comes around the corner with something Christmassy for the shopping trolley. "Too early?" he enquires and she says "no, pop it in". During the course of the advertisement she has persuaded herself to give in to the commercialisation of Christmas as everyone around her seems to be doing.

To parody another famous advertisement, "God is for life, not just for Christmas". On that basis is it ever too early to wonder about that most momentous event in history when God decided the time was right to bless the whole world with the gift of His most precious Son? We set aside the 25 December but it is probably not the actual day Jesus was born. So why not celebrate on the 17 or 19 of November? Of course, you can, there is nothing to

stop you. Indeed, as Christians we celebrate Christmas every day as we remember with thanksgiving in our prayers a God who is glorified in the highest heaven yet came to dwell among “men on whom His favour rests”. That ought to be something to cheer our hearts. Sadly, the vast majority of people will simply “pop it in the basket” along with the other so-called essentials of Christmas and forget about it for another year.

So how can we help those who do not celebrate the joys of Christmas in their hearts all year round? One way is to live out that joy in our daily lives so that others can see what a special time Christmas is to us. Another would be to take one (at least) of our colourful Christmas Carol service leaflets and invite a neighbour/friend/relative along. (Oh! did you notice, I “popped” a Christmas advert in there.) The greatest Christmas present anyone of us could receive this year would be to see a loved one come to know Jesus as their Saviour and really experience that blessing of “on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased” (Luke 2:14).

With your help and support we are coming to the end of 2016 in quite good condition for a church in interregnum. For this Lesley and I are grateful to God and to all the members of our congregation. OK, so everyone has a moan from time to time when things get a bit difficult but that is human nature. When we count our blessings we really can see that “for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.”

Wishing you every blessing this Christmas and in the year ahead.
Yours

Cyril Bamforth

MISSION OF THE MONTH ROYAL NATIONAL MISSION TO DEEP SEA FISHERMEN

Through practical Christian care the Fishermen's Mission outreach programme shares the compassion of Christ around our UK coastline. The witness of the Fishermen's Mission is about building relationships and taking Jesus on board. listening, helping, praying, and bringing the good news of Jesus.

Fishing remains the UK's most dangerous job with loss of life and serious, often life changing injury, common place throughout the UK fleet. Tight knit fishing communities throughout our country know the true cost of fish with many suffering the loss of friends, colleagues, and loved ones to the sea. 2016 has been a particularly devastating year with 14 fishermen being killed since April. It's sometimes easy to let figures wash over us, but behind every number there are heartbroken families who know they can turn to the Fishermen's Mission for help. All tragedies at sea are appalling but think for a moment of a widow in Milford Haven, Wales, who lost both her fisherman husband and son when their boat, the Milford Harvester hit rocks and was sunk in April.

After battling mountainous waves throughout their lives many retired fishermen face a different foe when they finally leave their boats.

Chronic ill health and a fight to survive in the face of grinding poverty are not unusual. Providing Christian hope to those in such desperate need is central to our outreach work.

Thank you that your prayers and financial support means our mission is a mission possible. We thank God for 135 years of care to our fishermen and their families.

Joyce Green

WHITE HORSE TAVERN

WHT begins again on Monday 9 January at 7.30pm in St Michael's House.

Having been intrigued by briefly looking at some of the early church Fathers, we want to go on to look at men like Luther, Calvin, Jonathan Edwards (not the Olympic athlete!) local boy John Owen down to Karl Barth.

To help us, one again we are calling on Michael Reeve. We will look at his book, 'Standing on Giants' Shoulders' . You are most welcome to join us and be blessed along with us.

Stephen Bailey

ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, REEDVILLE, VIRGINIA

On the Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost, 18 September, Hilary and I attended the 11.00 a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite II service at this Anglican type church.

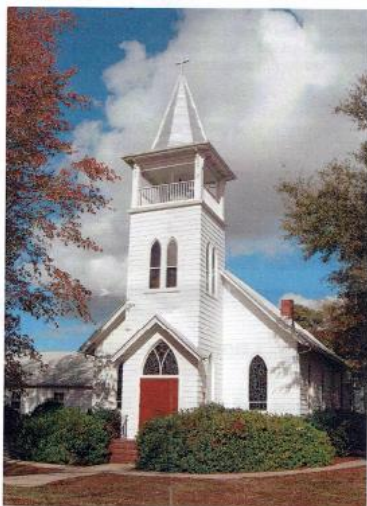
The sermon was given by Rev. Sandi Mizirl. She preached on Luke 16: 1-13, the only parable in the Bible in which Jesus appears to commend dishonesty. But the meaning is to tell us that we cannot serve two masters at the same time, God, and wealth.

St. Mary's is a type of High Church, although they belong to the branch who supports the appointment of a gay Bishop.

The Book of Common Prayer is used and for the hymns a book entitled Hymnal as Well as one entitled Lift Every Voice and Sing II.

An interesting observation is the fact that this church like many others in the United States has a Thrift Shop (Charity Shop) which provides a sizeable income for the St. Mary's.

St. Mary's Episcopal Church
"Where the Road Begins"



Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

11:00 AM Holy Eucharist Rite II
September 18, 2016

Peter Schaad

LIGHT PARTY 29 OCTOBER; ONCE UPON A TIME

On Saturday 29 October we held our annual light party. This year 40 children and 25 helpers came to celebrate Jesus as the Light of the World. Our theme was 'Once Upon a Time' and we came dressed as our favourite story characters.



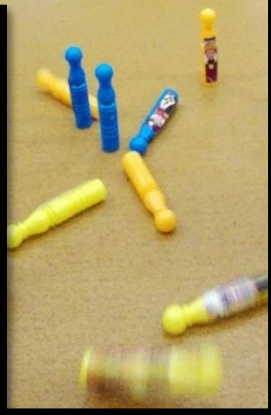
Our children began by making colourful lanterns with an LED candle which looked fab.



Next the children went in their groups to the large hall and rotated around 5 different activities. Joining our regular favourites of apple bobbing and 'donuts on a string' we played superhero skittles, pin the nose on Olaf (the snowman from Frozen) and the game where you pick up smarties with straws.

After snack time we sang 'Shine from the inside out'. We then returned to our 'Once Upon a Time' theme with a talk on stories of light vs darkness, with inspiration from Disney stories and Star Wars. We saw how Jesus was the ultimate story of light triumphing over darkness. The talk ended with challenge to follow turn to light and say 'I am a Christian'.

The children made their way home happily with their goody bags including a tract about light, LED finger lights, glow bracelets, a 'light of the world' notepad and pencil and of course some sweets. I would like to thank all our helpers for giving up their time to make the party successful. I would like to thank all of you who prayed for the event; we were really pleased with the increase in numbers of children and how much they enjoyed celebrating light with us.



LADIES GROUP

We had a change to our published programme this month; Angie found she was unable to show her pictures of China as arranged; but Jonathan Wicks was able to bring the Musical Evening originally planned for next June forward. Thank you, Jonathan.

Jonathan's worship songs were largely his own compositions; the exceptions being: a variation of Leonard Cohen's "Halleluiah", A Christmas song written by Joel and an evening praise song from Mission Praise. The songs covered many music styles including ballads and rock and roll. Jonathan guided us through the Bible, covering many different stories including Abraham, Joseph, Proverbs, the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus' ascension, and Paul's epistle to the Corinthians. The last song focused on our response to Jesus. We all had a lovely evening and thanks once again to Jonathan.

Next month will be our Christmas Meal; can any ladies who have not yet put their names down please contact Joyce, Helen or Cynthia.

Helen Kemp

GARDENING TIPS

So, to end the year in the garden. I have now got a nice little cluster of dried chillies ready for my cooking over the coming year. The apples are being eaten and the pears have gone.

I now look back at what I achieved in the space and wonder as to what next year will bring?

Will it be a hot summer? A cold winter? Will the grape vine produce and will the Hedgehog still wander round? These are things we don't have the answer for.

Instead I plan for a normal spring, and look to the bulbs for the first signs of spring. (Assuming I've remembered to plant them in good time) I plan to visit the fence and give it a coat of paint.

The final things for the month are to make sure the grit is in the garage next to the snow shovel for the cold winter days. (And the sledges, ready for the real fun)

Stay safe in the snow and ice, and if we get it, enjoy the white blanket the lord sends and admire its beauty. There is still in my memory the Sunday I first wardened the 8am service, the snow had dropped and there was all of 8 of us. It was the most beautiful, quiet, and close to calmness morning I think I have seen. The lord made it wonderful.

Dave Marriott

**The young people of St
Michaels present...**



Three Wise Men and a Baby

**6pm start
Saturday 17 December
St Michaels Church House
Gold coin entry; all profits to
Braintree Youth Project Charity
Everyone is invited to this special event
Refreshments will be available after the show.**

DECEMBER DIARY

1 Thursday

- 2.15pm Women's Fellowship
3.30pm ASK
7.30pm Rose Hill Bible Study

2 Friday

- 5.30pm 4th Braintree Beavers, Cubs & Scouts
6.30pm Parish Surgery – Church House

4 Sunday 2nd of Advent

- 8.00am Holy Communion – Revd Stephen Bailey
10.00am Church Family Worship – Andy Malcolm,
Fishermen's Mission
5.15pm Evening Prayer – Jesus Chapel
6.30pm Evening Worship – The future Messiah –
Cyril Bamforth
7.30pm Focus

5 Monday

- 12.15pm Spotlight
5.30pm 4th Braintree Beavers
7.30pm Bell Ringing
7.30pm White Horse Tavern – Church House
8.00pm Badminton

6 Tuesday

- 1.15pm Tiddlywinks

7 Wednesday

- 9:45am Meeting Point Bible Study
10.00am Holy Communion – Revd Stephen Bailey
6.30pm 4th Braintree Cubs & Scouts
8.00pm Bible Study Groups: Lifebuilder, Chestnut Grove
8.30pm SuMMiT – Beer, chat and curry – Wetherspoons,
Fairfield Road

8 Thursday

- 2.15pm Women's Fellowship
3.30pm ASK
7.30pm Rose Hill Bible Study

9 Friday

- 5.30pm 4th Braintree Beavers, Cubs & Scouts
6.30pm Parish Surgery – Church House

11 Sunday 3rd of Advent

- 8.00am Holy Communion – Revd Keith Holloway
10.00am Morning Worship – The protector – Canon John Turton
4.00pm Carols at Braintree Town FC
6.30pm Holy Communion - Restore your relationship – tbc
7.30pm Focus

12 Monday

- 5.30pm 4th Braintree Beavers
7.30pm Bell Ringing
7.30pm White Horse Tavern – Church House
8.00pm Badminton

13 Tuesday JANUARY LINK SUBMISSION DUE

- 1.15pm Tiddlywinks
8.00pm Ladies Group

14 Wednesday

- 9:45am Meeting Point Bible Study
6.30pm 4th Braintree Cubs & Scouts
7.25pm Elders Meeting – Church House
8.00pm Bible Study Group: Lifebuilder

15 Thursday

- 3.30pm ASK
7.30pm Rose Hill Bible Study
8.00pm Carry on Exploring Bible Study (please check with Lin first)

16 Friday

5.30pm 4th Braintree Beavers, Cubs & Scouts

6.30pm Parish Surgery – Church House

17 Saturday

6.00pm 3 Wise Men and a Baby (See page 12)

18 Sunday 4th of Advent

8.00am Holy Communion – Revd Sarah Hayward

10.00am Morning Holy Communion - The good decision –
Revd Stephen Bailey

6.30pm Carol Service – Roger Cook

7.30pm Focus

19 Monday

7.30pm Bell Ringing

7.30pm White Horse Tavern – Church House

8.00pm Badminton

21 Wednesday

8.00pm Bible Study Groups: Lifebuilder, Chestnut Grove

23 Friday

6.30pm Parish Surgery – Church House

24 Saturday

4.00pm Christingle (See page 17)

11.15pm Midnight Service and Communion

25 Sunday Christmas Day

8.00am Holy Communion – Revd Sarah Hayward

10.00am Morning Worship – Wise people seek out Jesus –
Cyril Bamforth

28 Wednesday

9:45am Meeting Point Bible Study

8.00pm Bible Study Groups: Lifebuilder

30 Friday

6.30pm Parish Surgery – Church House

7.30pm Flower Club

JANUARY

1 Sunday

8.00am

10.00am

Naming and circumcision

Holy Communion – tbc

Church Family Worship - tbc

Note:

No 5.15 nor 6.30 service at St. Michaels this day.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms

2 October

Arthur Walker

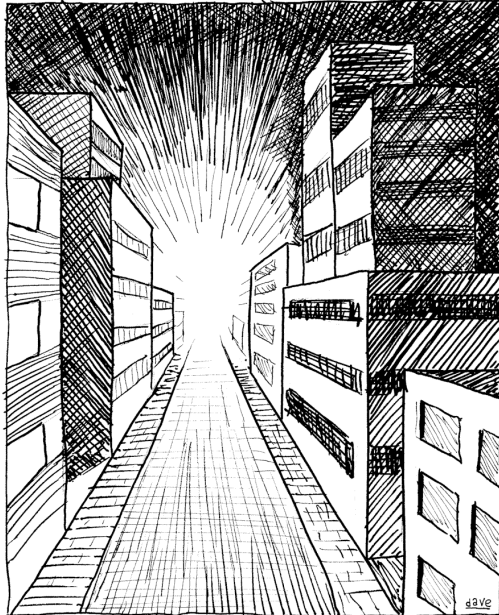
23 October

Katie Mayes

6 November

Scarlett Saunders

in the dark streets



Shines the everlasting light



Join us at our Christingle

Celebrate hope. Make children's voices heard.

Date: Saturday 24 December 2016

Time: 4:00 pm

Location: St Michaels Church Braintree

Please Contact: Joel Wicks; 01376 321248

Donations will go to The Children's Society

To find out more, visit christingle.org

Charity Registration No. 221124

01376 321248

BELFRY BULLETIN

Recently we have experienced some highs and lows along with the encouraging progress being made on practice nights and we look forward to this being reflected in our Service and Quarter Peal ringing in the District QP month and beyond.

One of our highs was on Sunday 6 November when a complete local band took part in a QP of 1260 changes of Plain Bob Doubles in 44mins. This was to celebrate Richard Oulds 70th Birthday, Treble Richard Ould his 1st on the Treble for a long time, 2 Debbie Hill 1st QP for at least 2 years, 3 Lin Ould, 4 Bradley Hill [c], 5 Peter Smith [c], and our 3 Tenors 6 Elliss Whitehouse, 7 Gareth Davies, 8 Phil Kelly, also for EACR Northern District QP month.



On Armistice Day Richard Ould and Elliss Whitehouse tolled the Tenor bell for 5mins before and 5mins after the observed 2mins silence.

Bradley Hill and Phil Kelly half muffled the bells for Remembrance Sunday when we rang Rounds and Call Changes and Plain Bob Doubles for 10am Service.

One of our lows was prior to the Civic Service of Remembrance when 4 of our band, Debbie Hill, Bradley Hill, Elliss Whitehouse and Peter Smith, were joined by 6 District ringers to attempt a Quarter Peal of Grandsire Caters on all 10 bells. After 45mins of very good half muffled ringing , having started late, we ran out of time with about 5mins left to ring to achieve the Quarter.

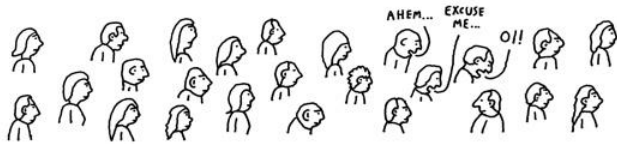
On a practice night recently, to my surprise , I acquired another offspring!!!!

A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL FROM THE TOWER

Peter Smith

A LITTLE HUMOUR ADVENT

WE LOOK FORWARD



WE PREPARE



WE WAIT



CartoonChurch.com

ITEMS FOR THE MAGAZINE.

If you are considering writing or sending me articles for the magazine. The following details really help.

- Email is the best form of communication
- If copy is sent attached to an e-mail, please ensure it is in **.doc** or **.pdf** formats and pictures **.jpg**.
- Happy to add URLs and links ready for online version of the magazine.
- Some articles may not fit into the print copy, so they may be edited down, this is so we can get as much in as possible.

- Images and pictures are good to break up the text and make the articles more engaging.
- Early is good.

Dave Marriott

A QUICK CHALLENGE



***Joseph
Nativity
Jesus***

***Manger
Wise men
Rejoice***

***Shepherd
Mary***

***Bethlehem
Inn***