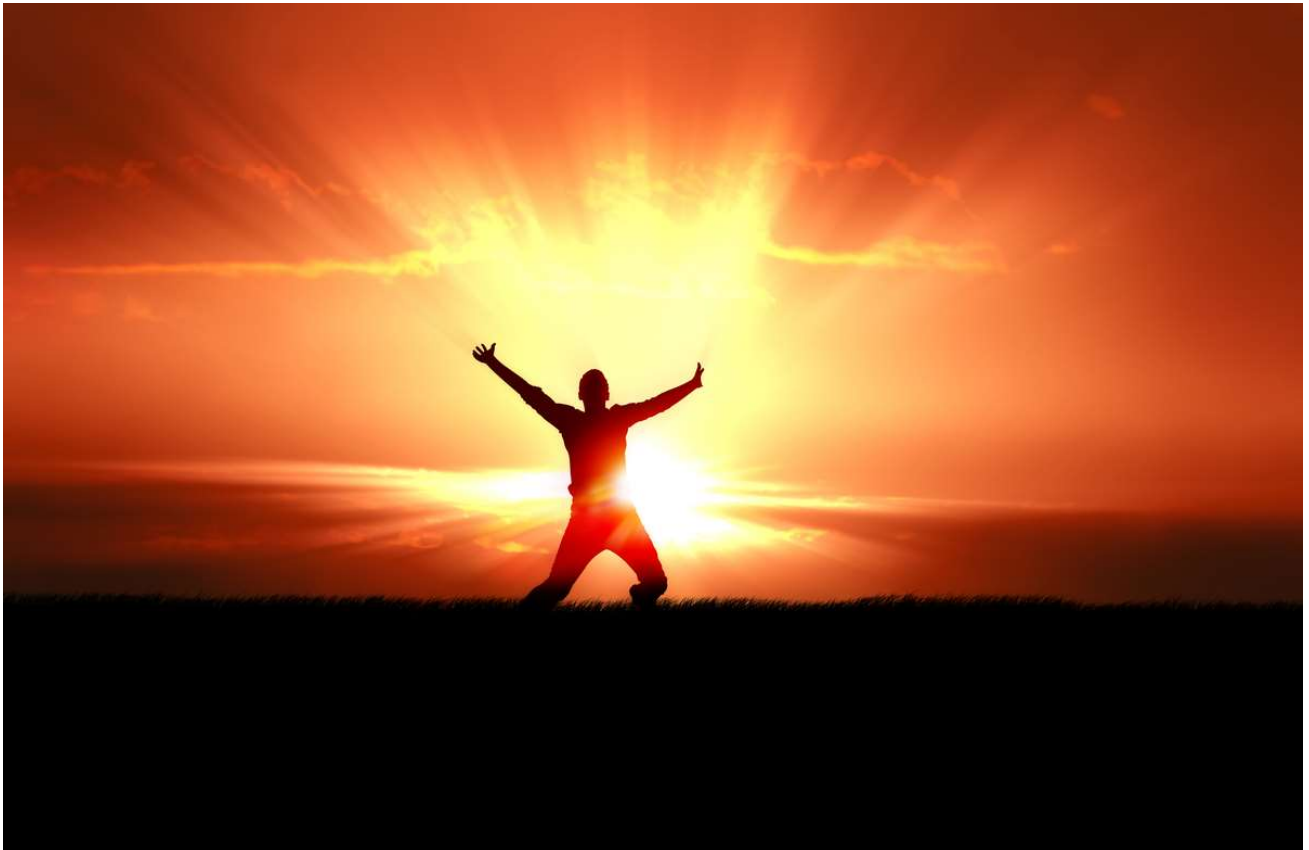


The LINK

digital edition

May 2020



**The Parish Church of
St Michael Braintree
www.stmichaelsbtrees.co.uk**



Responding to our changing times

Dear Friends,

I am very conscious that the coronavirus pandemic, and the resulting limitations on all of us, have put us each in different situations. Different from what we are used to, but different for each of us.

For some, it has meant we are busier than before, seeking to adapt to changing situations. If that is you, may I encourage you to lean on the Lord, day-by-day and to remember that “they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength.” (Isaiah 40:31).

For others, it may mean there is more time than previously. If so, treasure that extra time and use some of it get to know God better. “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.” (James 4:8)

Others may find the lock-down means they are spending more time alone and struggle for lack of human contact. But we are never truly alone – remember Jesus words to his disciples, “I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)

My hope and prayer is that, whatever our situation and circumstances, we will not wish this time away – we will not waste this time – but will use it to grow in the Lord. That is my hope and prayer for us as individuals, but also as a church family at St Michael’s.

With the continuing lock-down, we have been focusing initially on our “Worship on the Web” (both adult and children’s & families services) with the accompanying “St Michael’s by Phone” for those who don’t have internet access.

As we move into the more prolonged period of coronavirus restrictions, we will be starting some new things at St Michael's. Some will use Zoom video conferencing and some will be available to watch online or by phone. These include:-

- **After church coffee on Zoom**, starting on Sunday 3rd May from 11am
- **A monthly Zoom Prayer Meeting** – the first will be on Tuesday 5th May, 8-9pm
- **“Cook & Consider”** with Rachel Grove Smith – rustling up something tasty in the kitchen along with some Biblical truth!
- **VE Day (Victory in Europe Day) reflections** (Friday 8th May, 10am) – a short online service, giving thanks for our nation's deliverance in war and praying for God's mercy on our nation and our world, as we face the coronavirus pandemic
- **Life Explored course on Zoom** – asking the question “What would bring you real fulfilment, happiness and peace in life?” This will be on Wednesdays from 7.30pm, starting on Wednesday 13th May

Details of all the above will be made available through the weekly Notice Sheet and through my weekly emails. Don't forget the Poetry Competition (by Saturday 16th May), with categories for children, young people and adults.

Thank you to all who have been supporting one another through these difficult times. Please continue to pray for each other, particularly for a number of our church family who have faced bereavements. Do pray as well for our world and our nation, for those in leadership and those affected in many ways by coronavirus.

Wishing you every blessing in these hard times,

Nigel

MISSION OF THE MONTH LANGHAM PARTNERSHIP

‘I ALWAYS SKIPPED SCHOOL AS CHILD’

Hann Tzuu Joey Tan slightly exaggerates! He was in school long enough for a teacher to encourage him. His teacher found that he would rather spend his day watching TV than be in school. So, she found some TV programmes in mass communication. They caught his imagination.

HIS GIRL FRIEND’S BIBLE

Eventually he went to university in Malaysia. One day his girlfriend was given a Bible, and not knowing what to do with it, left it in Tan’s room. He read it and came across Matthew 6 where our Lord speaks of having a heavenly Father who cared for him. He thought this was so good and so made a decision to accept Christ. His mother was furious!

OWN TV PROGRAMME

Having gone to Malaysia Bible Seminary, his next step was to follow up his fascination with television, by having his own show. Let him tell us in his own words what he does – ‘I play a crazy guy who asks crazy questions about Christianity, and I also play a professor who tries to answer them’.

LEADING A CHINESE CHURCH

Tan is Chinese but lives in Malaysia, pastoring a church of Chinese believers. He is keen for his compatriots to find Christ too. So, he works at ways to link the Christian gospel with Chinese culture.

HARMONY AND SHALOM

Living in harmony with people and everything in the world is expressed in the Spring Festival of the Chinese New Year. Tan wants to point out that the Christian gospel is about the harmony Jesus Christ died to bring about between people, God and the creation.

LANGHAM SCHOLAR

Tan has been recognised as an able leader and teacher and has come to Cambridge UK for further studies. Please pray this month for men and women like Tan called by God to equip the church to make Christ known.

Website:

<https://uk.langham.org/>

Stephen Bailey

WORSHIP ON THE WEB

Children's & Families service

Hello everyone, I thought that I would begin by sharing some verses that I have found particularly helpful at this time from Psalm 139;

O LORD, you have searched me
and you know me.
You know when I sit and when I rise;
You perceive my thoughts from afar.
You discern my going out and my lying down;
You are familiar with all my ways.
Before a word is on my tongue
You know it completely, O LORD. (v 1 – 4)

I find it of great comfort that the God of the universe knows everything about my current circumstances. He knows and understands everything about the national situation but also knows exactly my new personal position and whereabouts with changed routines, differing responsibilities and daily challenges. It is also a huge encouragement that the same is true for my family and friends who I miss terribly and am concerned for. The Psalm goes on to say...

Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast. (v 7 – 10)

These following verses remind me that not only does God know absolutely everything, but He is with me. God is protecting, loving and guiding - He knows and loves us completely.

My role has involved putting together the Children's and Families Service which is evolving as the week's progress. Children and young people are taking part in the prayers and choosing their favourite songs. An additional section has been added which is an opportunity for people from the Church Family to say a 'hello' message. If you would like to be part of this feature, then do send your message to me via WhatsApp. My phone number is 07713566667. We would love to be encouraged by seeing you. Even if you don't have a video but have a 'shout out' or you would like your birthday to be mentioned then please do get in touch.

I am hoping that as well as puppets and pets that drama, cooking and craft will become a feature in the future. If there are things that you particularly enjoy or feel could be improved, then please contact me. All feedback is welcome.

I have also been putting together an activity sheet each week around the theme. Again, I would love to hear what you have enjoyed doing and if there are things that you would like to be included in future weeks.

This week saw the launch of our poetry competition! Please see next page for details.

My prayer is that you are staying safe and well and are being encouraged by God's Word. I am so looking forward to seeing everyone again.

With every blessing,
Rachel Grove Smith

POETRY COMPETITION

POETRY COMPETITION

This Sunday we are launching our poetry competition!!

Win £25 of **10 of Those** vouchers!

Write a poem either about the character of God or about the current situation.

You have until Saturday 16th May 2020 to send your poems to rgrovesmith@stmichaelsbtrees.co.uk or alternatively send them to The Vicarage.

This is a competition for everyone.

There are three different age groups; 10 and under, 11-15 and 16+

HOLIDAY AFTER THE LOCK-DOWN?

Why not head for Somerset? After weeks indoors, the freedom of the Mendip Hills will prove a tonic! It can be very pleasant in the October half-term!

To be precise, why not find a holiday cottage, campsite or B & B near the village of Burrington on the north side of the Mendip Hills, on the A.368. It is south-west of Bath. Having settled in, may I suggest a walk out of the village to Burrington Combe?

VIOLENT STORM

Just over 250 years ago, there was a storm in these hills. One man, out in the hills, looked for shelter from the soaking rain. He found protection from the heavy down-pour in a chasm in Burrington Combe. He was a local Church of England clergyman called Augustus Toplady.

When he got home, at some time, he put pen to paper and composed the famous hymn 'Rock of Ages cleft for me...'.

ALL THE IMAGES

We can work out what the images of 'Rock of Ages' point to. Toplady saw the human need of shelter from the storm of God's justice. He saw the death of the Lord Jesus as being provided for us as our shelter. He wants to be 'hidden' in Jesus Christ because the Lord is our refuge. But then he adds something that provokes us to think a little. 'Cleanse me from its (sin's) guilt.' Yes, we can appreciate that. Many have prayed these words as they deeply desired God's forgiveness. The strange bit comes next – '...cleanse me fromit's....power'

FROM SHELTER TO CLEANSING

Every genuine Christian believer sooner or later feels within themselves a force that pulls them away from God's love. It rises up within the Christian like a compelling torrent which makes them ashamed of all the hateful things they think and do.

FREE

The New Testament describes our Lord's death as a 'redemption'. It is as if he has come to the slave market and bought us from a cruel owner. He now owns us. Put it another way, he has come to prison and unbolted and unchained the doors so we can go free.

That's fine as far as it goes. It is true and needs to be enjoyed. But the old slave-owner wants us back and is prepared to use any force to enslave us again. The prison clamours for us to be brought back.

But Jesus owns us, having paid a great price. And he is strong enough to hold on to his possession.

Mr Toplady would say to us, when we feel the old slave owner trying to pull us back, call on the Lord Jesus to 'cure ' us from its power.

*Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee;
Let the water and the blood
From thy riven side
Which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from it guilt
And power.*

Stephen Bailey.

JOHN NEWTON: 1725-1807

In these days of 'lockdown' I sometimes daydream about walking from my chair where I have been sitting with my fellow contestants in the Mastermind Studio and taking my place in **THE** Mastermind Black Chair and John Humphrey's saying to me... Your name... and your chosen subject is... and my reply...



John Newton 1725 – 1807.

THEN

What a delight to have spent hours 'learning' the answer to every possible question ... so to delight (and encourage) you in these days of 'lockdown' here are some answers to some questions that could be asked ...

What caused John Newton to write his most well-known Hymn: Amazing Grace?

John Newton was a famous preacher of his day...people would travel many miles to hear him. In the New Year of 1773, he planned to preach his New Year sermon using the following words from:

I Chronicles 17: 16 which says:

**'Then King David went to sit before the LORD, and said,
'Who am I O LORD GOD, and what is my house, that you
have brought me thus far?'**

And as an illustration for this sermon he penned the words that many generations know well...

Amazing Grace- how sweet the sound...

Once I was lost but now am found

Was blind but now I see...

Throughout his life John Newton never got over the wonder of that 'Amazing Grace' that saved a wretch like me.

Complete this quote... 'Although my memory is fading....

So, an easy answer...my favourite quote:



How did these words in this quote come to be true for John Newton?

John Newton went to sea at the age of eleven. John Piper describes him as 'a debauched sailor, a miserable outcast, a slave trader.'

John Newton wrote of himself,

'I was capable of anything, 'I had not the least fear of God before my eyes.'

He wrote his own epitaph and described himself as '**Once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slaves in Africa**' but when he was not quite twenty-one God was about to close in...

John Newton was on his way home to England when he awoke to a violent storm, his room filling with water and quoting John Piper:

He was assigned to the pumps and heard himself say 'If this will not do, the Lord have mercy upon us.' It was the first time he had expressed need for God's mercy for many years.

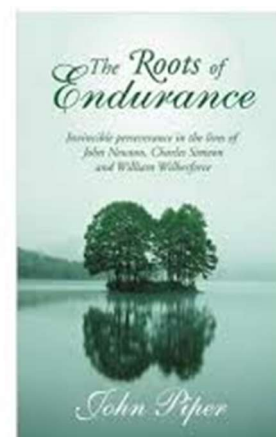
He worked the pumps from three in the morning until six o'clock the next evening when it looked as though there would be hope...and he began to pray...the rest of the voyage he spent reading and praying over Scripture...

And so, the second half of his epitaph reads like this, **'Was by the rich mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned and appointed to preach the faith he had long laboured to destroy.'**

I could answer more questions but my minute is up and I have another article for LINK next month!

Meanwhile a suggestion for a book that is easily available from **10 of those** and other places ...

Here it is, a book to get for the 'lockdown' if you would like to know more and a bonus ... find out about William Wilberforce and Charles Simeon too.



Jennifer Bailey

MAY DIARY

www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk

(Subject to change. Times of services is the broadcast time; they are available for later watching.)

3 Sunday

The Ever-present God

Psalm 139

9:45am Worship on the Web – Children's and Families Service

<http://stmichaelsbtree.co.uk/website/index.php/worship/junior-church>

10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult Service

<http://stmichaelsbtree.co.uk/website/index.php/worship/adult-service>

11:00am After Church "Zoom Coffee morning"

5 Tuesday

8.00pm Monthly Prayer Meeting - Zoom

8 Friday

10.00am VE Day (Victory in Europe Day) reflections

10 Sunday

The Forgiving God

Psalm 103

9:45am Worship on the Web – Children's and Families Service

10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult Service

11:00am After Church "Zoom Coffee morning"

12 Tuesday JUNE LINK SUBMISSION DUE

17 Sunday

The Protecting God

Psalm 46

9:45am Worship on the Web – Children’s and Families Service

10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult Service

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee morning”

All Age Tonight:

Mary & Martha: The better choice

Luke 10:38-42

6:00pm All Age Tonight on the Web – with Simon Foulds from
Langham Partnership

<http://stmichaelsbtrees.co.uk/website/index.php/worship/adult-service>

7:00pm After Church “Zoom Coffee evening”

24 Sunday

The Comforting God

Psalm 145

9:45am Worship on the Web – Children’s and Families Service

10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult Service

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee morning”

31 Sunday

The Spirit of God

John 14:15-31

9:45am Worship on the Web – Children’s and Families Service

10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult Service

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee morning”

Thank you for your continuing support during the Coronavirus crisis, we are very thankful for any support you can give. During the current outbreak we have seen a 60% increase in numbers fed compared to last years figures. By supporting us with your donations you are continuing to support those most in need.

We are in urgent need of the following:

Food Items

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Long Life Milk | • Baby Milk |
| • Tinned Corned Beef | • Packets of Instant Mash |
| • Tinned Spam | • Cereals |
| • Tinned Hot Dogs | • Tinned/Packet Custard |
| • Tinned Ravioli | • Jam/Spreads |
| • Tinned Spaghetti Bolognese | • Sponge puddings |
| • Tinned Macaroni Cheese | • Tin/Packet Custard |
| • Cold Tinned Meat | • Washing Up Liquid |
| • Tinned Beans | • Can openers |
| • Baby Food | • Carrier Bags |

Please note: We often ask for small packs—Larger packs do not fit in our boxes and make it difficult for our clients to carry home. Also, we are unable (for hygiene reasons) to split larger sizes or catering packs.

We are grateful for your donations to the Braintree Area foodbank. However, we can only accept donations of freshly-bought, unopened and undamaged goods which are still well within their “use by” date (no less than 6 months).

We cannot use items which do not meet these requirements, and the donation is wasted.

A GARDENER WRITES

It has been a while since I wrote in a gardening article, though now I suppose as most of my woken day is in the garden it's time I did so again. (Yes, I use it as my office too a lot of the time as those of you I have met on Teams, Zoom or Conferoo know.)



One thing I have enjoyed over the past few weeks is the time to look at God's other creations at play in the garden. Taking the time to watch as a robin sits on a post on the corner of my raised beds and it then jumping back in shock as a peacock butterfly had the nerve to land on the same post top was a moment in particular that made me smile.



I have seen the bright colours of my wisteria above the tulip bulbs and the primroses brighten up the corner of the garden.

Some of this seems trivial but taking the time to see the creation that we have been given stewardship of, it reminds me of the beauty of God's world.

"And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and

there was morning, the sixth day." Genesis 1:31

In Matthew 25, Jesus gives us the parable of the servant looking after the man's property, the talents.

"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them." Matthew 25:14



At this time, it might be an opportunity to reflect what we can do to look after the planet we have been entrusted in. How can we support the Lord's other creations, find food to eat and prevent pollution from damaging the world?

Dave Marriott



P.S. to make you smile, a pot of “*Happy Flowers*” as I like to call Violas



BELFRY BULLETIN

BELL RESTORATION UPDATE

With the Covid 19 lockdown there has been very little activity with the work on our bells.

We have still to raise £12,000 and with fundraising difficult in the current economic climate but we will get there.

We have been meeting weekly on Zoom.

Two very enjoyable chatty evenings have been held sharing some cheese and wine.

On Tuesday 7th April there was a very competitive?? Quiz night. Ellis kept us all in order as Quiz Master. Debbie and Bradley emerged as the winners and received a virtual prize.

We were ringing together again on 14th April [all in our own homes]. Again, using Zoom in conjunction with a bell ringing website we could ring as a band. It is not easy at first, but we got the hang of it and rang rounds on 6, Plain Bob Doubles and Minor.

The Ringers wish you all our best wishes and hope keep well. STAY SAFE and you will hear us ringing again as soon as we can.

Peter Smith

STEPPING BACK IN TIME

This is what the front cover of the Magazine looked 100 years ago.


VOL. LIV. MAY, 1920. No. 5.

The Braintree Parish Magazine.

Clergy:
Vicar: Rev. DAVID B. BARCLAY, M.A., The Vicarage. *Curate:* Rev. J. PITTS, L.Th., Lyons, London Rd.
Churchwardens: *Vicar's Warden:* Mr. F. J. WEAVER, M.A. *Parish Warden:* Mr. J. F. BLANDIN.
Church Army Officer: CAPT. HARRER. **Organist:** Mr. HUBERT LINES.

Sidesmen:

Mr. A. J. BAGLEY	Mr. F. J. FULLER	Mr. A. W. S. LUDGATE	Mr. A. H. SROODRIDGE
" G. T. BARTON	" L. C. GALL	" T. MALYN	" D. SMITH
" C. F. BLANDIN	" H. GOODEY	" W. MATY	" J. SPURGEON
" C. A. BROWN	" J. GREENWOOD	" A. MATY	" C. E. SUCKLING
" H. C. BROWN	" P. V. HAWKES	" A. W. PARMENTER	" D. UCHER
" J. CLIFFE	" U. H. HOWARD	" W. P. PILCHER	" C. WRIGHT
" S. B. DAW	" F. H. LAYBROOK	" C. QUASTMAN	" A. WARREN
		" R. C. SKARROCK	" F. J. WILKE



St. Michael's, Braintree.
HOURS OF DIVINE SERVICE.

ON SUNDAYS			
Holy Communion every Sunday	8.0 a.m.	Girls' Bible Class (Vicarage Room) - 2.30 p.m.	
" " 1st Sunday also at	7.0 a.m.	Women's Bible Class (Vicarage Room) - 3.15 p.m.	
" " 1st & 3rd Sunday after Morning Service.		Evening Prayer - 4.30 p.m.	
" " every 3th Sunday after Evening Service.		ON WEEK-DAYS	
Morning Prayer	11 a.m.	Daily Service	11 a.m.
Sunday School	10 a.m.	Wednesdays—Evening Prayer and Address	7.30 p.m.
Young Men's Bible Class (Vestry)	10 a.m.	ON SAINTS' DAYS. Holy Communion	11 a.m.
Children's Service every Sunday	3 p.m.	Saturdays—Parochial Prayer Mtg. (Ch. Vy.)	7.30 p.m.

The Services of the Parish Church are maintained solely by the weekly offerings of the Congregation.

Churchings before or after any week-day service, and before or after the service on Sunday afternoon.

Holy Baptism is administered during service on Wednesdays, at 7.30 p.m.; on Fridays, at 11 a.m.; and on the 1st Sunday in the month at 3 p.m.; on other Sundays at 3.45. In all cases previous notice should be given. A form for the purpose may be obtained from the Verger.

Notices. All seats in Church which are unoccupied when the five minutes' bell begins are free and open to all comers. In Summer the Church is open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and in Winter from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. for devotion.

Verger: Mr. L. W. WIFFEN, 7, Notley Road.

Solemnization of Matrimony on any week-day after a day's notice. Publication Banns, 1/6; Marriage Fee, 6/- With Organ or Bells, the Fees are special.

St. Paul's Mission Church, East Street.
 Sundays—Evening Service 6.30 p.m., Holy Communion as announced.

Cases of Sickness should be reported at once, to the Clergy. For cases requiring relief or advice, papers to be signed, or notices, the Clergy attend every Friday morning at the Church Vestry, before and after service.

The Shoscroft Printing Co., Ltd., Braintree