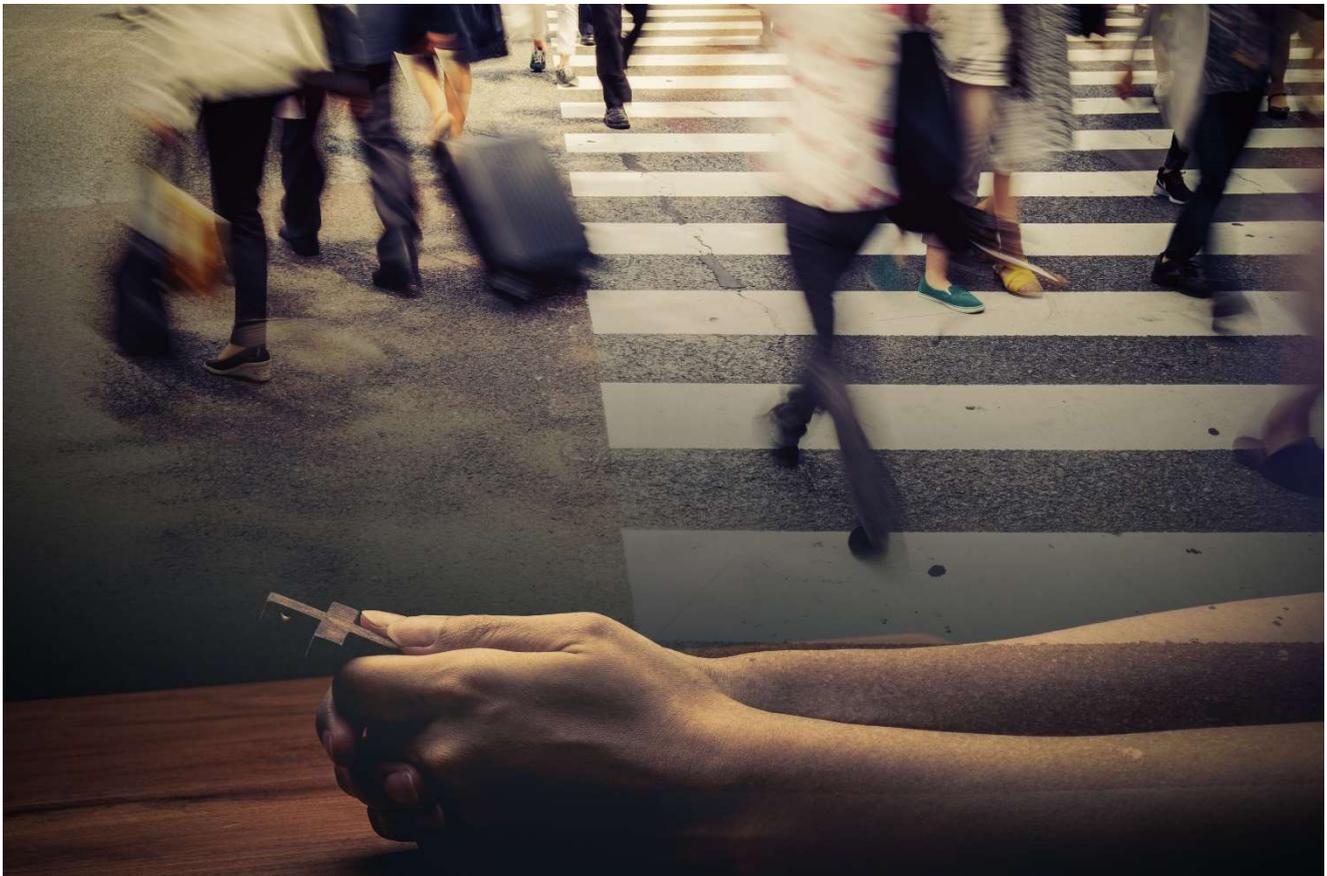


# The LINK

digital edition

June 2021



The Parish Church of  
St Michael Braintree  
[www.stmichaelsbtrees.co.uk](http://www.stmichaelsbtrees.co.uk)



## The Suffering Church

Dear Friends,

We are continuing our services **online** (YouTube), through “**St Michael’s by Phone**”, on **Zoom** and **in church**. We hope you will be able to worship God with us in at least one of these ways.

In May, we have done some **new things as part of our “in person” worship**, including singing our final song together outside on the grass, as well as sharing Holy Communion (in one kind). It has been good to welcome some people back to church, as well as being joined by some people new to St Michael’s. Do please consider joining us back in St Michael’s Church one Sunday.

On Sunday 13th June, we are having our annual **Suffering Church Sunday** with a speaker from Open Doors. (Please also see Ade’s article in the [LINK](#)). The level of Christian persecution worldwide is shocking. At least 340 million Christians around the world experience systematic discrimination, unfair treatment and persecution.

Open Doors publish their **World Watch List** each year, in which they identify the top 50 countries where following Jesus costs the most. Whilst attitudes, by some people, to Bible-believing Christians has hardened in the UK in recent years, the cost of being a Christian in the UK is nowhere near as tough as in those top 50 countries in the World Watch List.

Do please join us at **one of our services that Sunday**, as we hear about the suffering church and what we can do to help our persecuted brothers and sisters. And please be praying for those who are at risk of imprisonment, beatings and even death for following Jesus.

Wishing you every blessing,

Nigel

## MISSION OF THE MONTH OPEN DOORS

Dear Friends

I am delighted to share the amazing work of Open Doors – our mission of the month. Open Doors is an international ministry serving persecuted Christians and churches worldwide. The support they offer comes in many forms...supplying Bibles, leadership training, literacy programmes, livelihood support and not to mention their advocacy work – shining light on the persecution that is still prevalent in many countries (read more about the World Watch List 2021: <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/world-watch-list/>)

This month, the organisation focus is on Iran and Middle East, where persecution is very much active. We read about the plight of secret believers like, Taher\* and Donya\*, whose home were raided by the secret service, and Taher was arrested and subjected to interrogation. The family were subjected to continued persecution that eventually led to them taking refuge in Turkey.

We welcome back Graham Walker – he last visited us on November 2019 speaking on Suffering Church Sunday. This year, Suffering Church Sunday will take place on June 13th, where Graham will be with us in person for our 10am service in church, when we will have an interview and a live talk. May I encourage everyone (if you can) to join us and hear at first hand, the courageous stories and faith of Christians living under severe persecution, and how we as a church can stand with our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world. For those not able to join us in person, there will be opportunity to listen to pre-recorded adult and/or children's talk.

To find out more about Open Doors and prayer requests, visit <https://www.opendoorsuk.org>

*Ade Odupitan*

\* Names changed for security reasons

## **‘FREE AT LAST’**

### **THAT PHONE CALL**

Anne-Isabelle Tollet’s ‘phone rang at 5.47am on Wednesday 31st October 2018.

‘Good morning,’ said Ashiq. ‘Asia is free’.

Ashiq is Asia Biba’s husband. He phoned journalist Anne-Isabelle to rejoice that her campaigning efforts and the work of Saif ul Malook, Asia’s lawyer had been successful.

Saif ul Malook is a courageous Pakistani Muslim, who at great risk to his own personal safety, speaks for Christians in Pakistan who have been falsely accused and imprisoned for so-called blasphemy. For years he had appealed through the courts for an end to the death sentence passed on Asia.

Anne-Isabel Tollett is a French journalist who took up Asia’s case, shocked that the notorious death sentence passed on her for the false charge of blasphemy. Anne-Isabel was convinced of Asia innocence, and campaigned for eight years for her release from prison.

### **A CUP OF WATER ON A HOT DAY**

Along with the other women of her village, Asia was working in the fields on a torrid day. She took a drink of water in a cup used by all the working women. Some Muslim women were angry that the Christian woman, Asia, should drink from the cup they used. She had defiled it and she was counted as a blasphemer, which in Pakistan carries the death penalty.

### **PRISON NIGHTMARE**

She was dragged to court, tried, and found guilty of blasphemy. Separated from her husband, Ashiq, and her two young daughters, Eilsha and Eisham, she began nine years of harsh life in prison as her case was appealed. Time and time again her court appearance was put back.

In prison she was badly ill-treated. She found help from some: others betrayed her. Fellow prisoners were cruel. But there is the amazing story of Mamita, a Christian lady, who also at great risk to herself, comforted Asia by praying, reading the Bible and in a simple way celebrated Christmas and Easter as best they could in Asia's solitary confinement.

#### WORTH READING THE STORY FOR YOURSELF.

You will find the account grim. There are unexpected things in Asia's story. Help comes from strange places. It is a sad story of heroes and villains but with a glorious ending.

It gives us an insight into the appalling suffering of fellow Christians who are imprisoned for following Jesus Christ. It tells of real Christian trust and its reward. 'Free at Last' encourages us to pray with insight and hope for persecuted Christians.

'Free at Last' is easy to get hold of. I read it on Kindle. You can get in on-line by simply typing its name in your search box. It is a remarkable tale of our times.

*Stephen Bailey*

P.S. If can't get a copy, please let me know and I'll do my best to get one sent to you from booksellers or even Amazon!

## ARE YOU CONNECTED?

James wrote,

*“Submit yourselves, then, to GOD. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to GOD and He will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord and He will lift you up.” (James 4:7-10)*

And speaking of being disconnected, one missionary tells of his experience about being assigned a car that would not start without a push. After pondering this problem, he devised a plan. He went to the school near his home, got permission to take some children out of class, and had them push his car off. As he made his rounds, he would either park on a hill or leave the engine running. He used this ingenious procedure for two years.

When a new missionary came to take over his station, he proudly began to explain his arrangement for getting the car started. As he was talking, the young missionary picked up the hood only to find that the only trouble was a loose cable. He gave the cable a twist, stepped into the car, pushed the switch, and the engine roared to life.

For two years, needless trouble had become routine – but the power was there all along – the only thing that was needed was a better connection!

So, it is for us as believers, we can walk through this life stumbling and struggling ... having a loose connection with GOD – or we can determine to be steadfastly connected to Him – and His unlimited power.

As James clearly says, “Draw near to me, and I draw near to you,” so we have the choice to be as close or as distant as we want to the King of Kings! GOD’s decision to be intimate with us was already made when

He displayed His love for us through the sacrifice of His Son! Now it is in our hands ... what kind of relationship do we want?Hi H

Dear Readers, So let's resolve to spend some time under the hood, double checking those connections, and making whatever adjustments necessary to get better connected to GOD – and His omnipotent power. Amazingly, if you go through the self-inspection process – you will begin going through personal revival – and true revival begins one person at a time – perhaps it will be you very soon!

*Peter Schaad (from the “Worthy Brief”)*

# JUNE DIARY

[www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk](http://www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk)

Online services are launched on Sundays as follows:

9.45am – Children’s & Families service – now on Zoom

10.00am – Adult services & monthly Family Service

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

Links for Zoom services are on Nigel Adams’ weekly email – these need to be accessed “live” (at the time).

The 10am YouTube services are available at these times, or to watch or listen to after those times, on catch-up.

## **1 Tuesday**

2:00pm Bible reading group on Conferoo

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

## **4 Thursday**

11:00am Coffee@Home “Monthly Zoom Coffee morning”

## **5 Friday**

7.30pm Identity Course on Zoom (final session)

## **6 Sunday**

10:00am Worship on the Web – Family Worship

10:00am Church Family Worship in Church – Book in advance

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

6.30pm Holy Communion on Zoom

## **8 Tuesday**

2:00pm Bible reading group on Conferoo

8 - 9pm First Priority Prayer Meeting on Zoom

## **9 Wednesday**

10:00am Meeting Point on Zoom

## **13 Sunday – Suffering Church Sunday (Open Doors)**

9:45am Children’s and Families Service – Live on Zoom

10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult Service

10:00am Morning worship in Church – Book in advance

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

## **15 Tuesday**

2:00pm Bible reading group on Conferoo

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

## **16 Wednesday**

10:00am Meeting Point on Zoom

## **20 Sunday**

9:45am Children’s and Families Service – Live on Zoom

10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult service

10:00am Morning worship in Church – Book in advance

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

6:30pm All Age Tonight – Live on Zoom

## **22 Tuesday JULY LINK SUBMISSION DUE**

2:00pm Bible reading group on Conferoo

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

## **23 Wednesday**

10:00am Meeting Point on Zoom

## **27 Sunday**

9:45am Children’s and Families Service – Live on Zoom

10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult Service

10:00am Morning worship in Church – Book in advance

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

## **29 Tuesday**

2:00pm Bible reading group on Conferoo

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

## **30 Wednesday**

10:00am Meeting Point on Zoom

7:30pm Christian Institute Presentation on Zoom

## **BELFRY BULLETIN**

### **BELL RESTORATION UPDATE**

In preparation for the rehang of the bells scaffolding needed to be erected in the tower over the toilets. With services in mind, we were careful not to impede the aisle at the rear of the church and the toilet doorway.

On Tuesday 18th May 2021 we met the bell hangers from White's of Appleton at St. Michael's at 9.30am and began the preparation work. A hand operated chain pulley was fixed to the scaffolding with access to the floor of the church. An electrically operated pulley installed on the bell frame in the bell chamber with access to the platform on the scaffolding. A forklift trolley was taken up onto the platform of the scaffolding.

By now we were all getting excited for the operation to start.

At 11.26am the 1st bell, the Treble, left the church floor on its journey up the tower to the bell chamber and so began the rehang of St. Michael's bells.

The process to get the bells from the ground floor to the bell chamber was a well organised and operated system with the bells taken up in the appropriate for ease of installation.

The bell was brought on a pallet by forklift trolley, on a board runway, to the pulley chain underneath the scaffolding. It was hand winched up to the platform above the toilet and onto another forklift trolley to be taken along the runway to the chains of the electric pulley and lifted the 2 floors into the bell chamber. The bell was then manoeuvred into place and attached to the bell frame.

We did this 7 times on Tuesday a very rewarding days' work.

On Wednesday the process started again with the new wheels, sliders, slider beds, stays and clappers to be winched up to the bell chamber. This needed to be done before the last bell was put in place as it would block the trap door to the bell chamber. With this achieved the bells then followed.

The last bell to leave the church floor was the Tenor at 10.02am on Wednesday 19th March 2021 and hung in the frame.

The bell hangers proceeded to attach the wheels, stays, sliders, slider beds and clappers to the bells. While this was going on the rest of us took down the forklift trolley and pulley's and loaded them and White's pallets and boards onto the lorry. Having cleared the floor we then hovered, swept and tidied up.

This was a job for a possible 3 and a bit days and did it in 2 a magnificent achievement, thanks in no small measure to the abilities of White's bell hangers and the determination of our helpers.

That was not quite the end for us the St. Michael's ringers as we had to go into the bell chamber and have look and a little play. I am at a loss to describe how exciting it all was.

Well done, Bradley.

*Peter Smith*