

# **The LINK**

digital edition

## **January 2022**



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



# *Verse of the Year 2022*



*I will sing of the steadfast  
love of the Lord, forever.*

*Psalm 89:1*

**Happy New Year!**

Dear Friends,

I hope that 2022 will be a happy (or at least a happier) New Year for you. We have had two tough years with the Coronavirus pandemic and are not out of the pandemic yet. It has been tough, not just for those who have been ill or bereaved as a direct result of the virus, but for all of us, with the restrictions it has brought.

In this situation, I believe our Verse of the Year for 2022 is very timely and helpful:

***“I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever.”*** (Psalm 89:1)

In the uncertainties of new variants of the virus, and the changes and renewed restrictions they bring, we can find ourselves longing for certainty and stability. God’s love for us is certain and steadfast. It is something worth singing about.

But in what sense will we sing of God’s love forever? God’s steadfast love led him to send his Son Jesus, to live, die and rise to life. That is where our heavenly hope comes from, and that means we can sing both now and in eternity.

Wishing you every blessing for the New Year,

Nigel



## MISSION OF THE MONTH CROSSLINKS

*This is the kind of thing that 'Crosslinks' does'.*

*Gillian is a 'Crosslinks' mission partner in Thailand. She writes about Mae who lives in one of Bangkok's slum communities.*

### *HOME ALONE*

*Life is tough for Mae - her mum is in and out of prison and Mae is often left to fend for herself.*

### *GILLIAN'S SCHOOL*

*This is the school that Mae attends and where she flourishes and where she loves to learn. But Gillian says the biggest difference in Mae's life has come from knowing how much she matters to God. Mae is from a Buddhist background. Hearing about the God who loves her has given her a sense of joy she has never felt before.*

### *MAE WRITES*

*'Jesus is my friend. He sees me, he listens to me, he died for me. He is my family. He left heaven for me, he will stay with me'.*

*From John McLernon, Mission Director, Crosslinks*

*Stephen Bailey is St Michaels rep for Crosslinks*

## **'HERE BE DRAGONS!'**

You stumble across an ancient map of Europe. The British Isles you recognise. That's easy. Spain and France you can pick out. But the map goes back centuries and the countries of eastern Europe are not named. To those living on the fringe of the western part of the continent, eastern Europe is unknown. The mapmaker has only written 'here be dragons'.

We might write over 2022, 'here be dragons'. We don't know what may happen. We hope the new year will prove to be a flower strewn meadow – who knows!

## **THE GLASS IS HALF EMPTY!**

For many people the unknown is fearful. Such folks would remind us that Covid hit us unexpectedly. It came out of the blue in 2020. So it is not unreasonable to say that 2022 may not be a happy year. There are two sorts of people. One group looks at a half filled glass of water and they say, 'the glass is half empty'. Their nature is to look on the down-side of life.

## **THE GLASS IS HALF FULL!**

Other are more optimistic. They look at the same glass and they say the glass is half full! They are on the lookout for good things, pleasant surprises and the blessings of this life.

## **'HALF EMPTY...HALF FULL...'**

Neither view is Christian or Biblical. The Bible constantly reminds us that everything that happens is from the good hand of God. (Job 1:21). Even the bad things that happen to us are from God. But the painful things that we go through don't have the last word. (Job 42:10, 12).

## IN GOD'S GYMNASIUM

In fact the things we find tough and distasteful from God's hand work for our good (Romans 8:28). Once God our Father has brought us by God the Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ, we don't so much start a journey, but enter God's gymnasium.

And we are not simply let loose in the gym to run around as we might like. We are in the hand of a personal trainer. His job is to know exactly what we need to make us fit for God.

## 'NO GAIN WITHOUT PAIN'

These words might be written over the entrance of the gym. They come from the mouth of an American in the eighteenth century, Benjamin Franklin. He probably got them from the first Christians who settled on the eastern seaboard of North America. Ask any modern day New Englander and he will tell you how tough it was for those first settlers.

## MORE THAN PROSPEROUS

Through endurance and hard work those earlier settlers become well-off. But they knew that 'no gain without pain' meant that God was training them to love and serve him better and that was the basis of their happiness.

## DRAGONS IN 2022?

Who knows? But whatever happens to the Christian believer will be for the believer's good and happiness. Fate, luck or chance are not in control. There is no blind force behind the universe. For God our Father is sure to have the last word.

*Stephen Bailey*

## FARMING SEASON

The end of 2021 and the beginning of 2022 look set to remain wet, mild and grey. The soil has become very saturated and it has become difficult to even walk on the field let alone get a tractor on. On the whole, I am pleased with how the wheat crops are growing however you can see how the wet soil affects the plants, particularly the later drilled crops which are less established. When the soil becomes saturated, the moisture fills the pockets of air with water depriving the plant of oxygen which in turn can stunt its growth and begin to turn the leaves yellow. This is a good time to check the land drains are working properly and look for problem drainage areas, which may be able to be rectified in the future.



Over the Christmas break we have taken family walks and the picture attached was taken on one. It is often a good time to reflect on the past year and look ahead to the future and arable farming is no different. 2022 looks like it will be a challenging year with input costs such as artificial fertilizer going up at an alarming rate mainly because of the increase in gas prices. Then there is also the on going challenge of reducing our emission of greenhouse gases so in this article I will be looking at future technologies which will hopefully help reduce our inputs and also reduce the carbon footprint of our industry, however as often is the case with new technology it is not without its controversies.

The latest farming machinery increasingly relies on satellite navigation and computer processing and this is all for the benefit of what is now termed 'precision farming'. Precision farming involves analysing the soil of every square metre of a field to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the nutrients contained within that soil. This information is then downloaded into the tractor and its implement, such as the crop sprayer or fertilizer spreader, which is especially adapted to alter its distribution pattern automatically as the tractor passes over the varying soil pattern. With satellite navigation the tractor can position itself to within two centimetres of accuracy when travelling on the field and it uses this locational guidance to vary the rate of the inputs it applies to the crop according to the information which has been given. The farmer ultimately makes the decision on where to increase or decrease the agrichemical inputs based on the soil analysis, the plant strength and the conditions. Sounds complicated and expensive? Well yes it is, which is why many farmers have yet to invest in this type of technology even though there is potential to save input costs and even enhance crop yields. One of the big problems is that even though the farmer may have all this data on his soil types and plant strength he cannot accurately predict

what type of season the weather will provide in terms of sunlight and rainfall and these are two of the most important factors.

The next idea is a bigger deal, and even considered by some to be a game changer, and this is genetically modified crops. This involves genetically engineering the plants DNA to either improve its potential, make it more resilient to drought, disease and pests or even give it a competitive advantage against weeds. This could potentially make crops cheaper to grow and generally make farming more productive. Wheat, for example, has been grown and developed for well over 10,000 years. In the beginning, our ancestors would have naturally selected plants which held onto their seeds longer so they could be harvested more easily as plants have a natural tendency to disperse their seeds. Since then, over thousands of years, the wheat plants have been selected to improve yields and other traits which make them easier to grow. GM crops could dramatically speed up this process of plant development and even improve it in ways which could not be naturally created. For example, a wheat plant could be modified to have a root structure like a leguminous plant such as a pea or bean plant. This would enable it to fix some of its own nitrogen in the roots enabling the farmer to reduce the amount of fertilizer he applies to the crop, making the crop cheaper to grow, and reducing the carbon footprint!

Clearly, GM foods are controversial mainly because there is a possibility that unintended gene transfer could take place beyond the crop. The consequences of such a transfer would be completely uncertain, although in practice genetically engineered plants only have a short lifespan. The political will to progress with such technology is becoming stronger particularly in light of the pandemic. Our political leaders are often keen to say that they will be 'guided by the science' even though they

usually don't know the outcomes any better than the rest of us, however despite the scepticism, scientific advances have often improved our lives and sometimes even saved them. I am reminded of Genesis 1:26 where God says... "*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over all the earth.*" With this degree of control comes much responsibility so it's a relief that ultimately the control and responsibility belongs to God Himself. Bearing this in mind it's important we make the right decisions going forward not just for ourselves but also to please God too, after all it is His creation!

*Adam Grove Smith*

## A LESSON IN PATIENCE

***“Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the LORD abode on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and on the seventh day He call to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. The sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud as he went up into the mountain; and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.” (Exodus 24:15-18)***

Patience is one of those things... so hard to learn it... so hard to practice it faithfully in our daily walk. It's one of those things I truly wish we didn't have to learn - but God requires it of us! As I was reading through this passage again in Exodus, it dawned on me that Moses sat on the mountain for **six entire days** before the Lord spoke to him. He had to patiently wait for the Lord for six days!

So often we think we can just do as we please with our lives and then come running to God for a few minutes of prayer and get an answer right away but I don't believe it is always that simple. Even Moses needed to be prepared for six full days in order to be able experience the awesome presence of the Lord! If **Moses** had to wait six days - then it should not surprise us if we need to wait 60 days, 60 months or even 60 years for the Lord to prepare us to receive His blessing!

Be encouraged! The Lord is preparing us for great things. Spend more time seeking Him and worshipping Him. Keep waiting at His feet. He will meet us! There's so much work to be done.

*Supplied from “The Worthy Brief” by Peter Schaad*

## CHURCH FAMILY WORSHIP 2022.

Our theme for 2022 is QUESTIONS!

Each month we will consider a question asked by Jesus (apart from January when the question is asked by the Wise men...)

This year there will be the opportunity to ask the questions that you have.... whatever they are... if you would like a personal answer then add your name ... otherwise pop your questions in the question box in Junior Church or in Church and they will be answered... this is a promise!

We may answer the questions at CFW... we may answer the questions via the Link Magazine

So

All the questions that you have... 2022 is the year to get them answered!

Please ...lots of questions!

Also watch for Book Reviews that will answer questions and be available to buy!

An exciting year.

And a reminder of who the Church Family Worship Planning Group are:

*Jennifer Bailey, Janet Bamforth, Rachel Grove-Smith, Christine Hart, Kirsty Huxter Ed Nash and Katie Whitlock*

# St Michael's

## Church Family Worship 2022

Sundays at 10.00am in Church

Jan 2	Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?
Feb 6	What are you seeking?
Mar 6	Do you see anything? But who do you say I am?
Mar 27*	Were not ten cleansed?
May 1	Why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?
Jun 5	What do you think?
Jul 3	Do you believe I am able to do this?
Aug 7	Why do you ask me about what is good?
Sep 4	Which is easier to say?
Oct 2	Why are you anxious?
Nov 6	Which of these three proved to be a neighbour?
Dec 4	Why do you stand looking into heaven?

\*Normally the 1st Sunday of the month

# St Michael's All-Age-Tonight 2022

Sundays at 6.30pm in Church

- Jan 16 Find true contentment
- Feb 20 Hold to the truth
- Mar 20 Prosper with a clear conscience
- Apr 10\* Affair proof your relationships
- May 15 Manage your anger
- Jun 19 Keep the peace with your parents
- Jul 17 Catch your breath
- Sep 18 Take God seriously
- Oct 16 Know the real God
- Nov 20 Live by priorities

\*Normally the 3rd Sunday of the month  
Come and join our informal interactive evening service  
targeting those aged from 10 to 100!

## 70 YEARS AGO – THE LIFE OF OUR CHURCH

### *PREACHER'S PRAYER*

I do not ask  
that crowds so throng the temple  
that standing room be at a price;  
I only ask that as I voice the message,  
they may see Christ.

I do not ask  
For churchly pomp or pageant,  
or music such as wealth alone can buy;  
I only pray that as I voice the message,  
he may be nigh.

I do not ask  
that man sound my praises,  
or headlines spread my name abroad;  
I only pray that as I voice the message,  
hearts may find God.

Ralph S. Centiman

### Excerpts St Paul's Notes

My Dear Friends,  
Once again we have passed through another year and automatically find ourselves looking back over the past twelve months, possibly with some apprehension mingled with rejoicing, and hopefully anticipating the unknown future.

The one event of the past year at which stands out in my mind above every other is the installation of our organ. The splendid

addresses which we heard, the packed Church on the Saturday and Sunday, and the magnificent effort of raising £250 (*equivalent to £3,000 today*) in a matter of two months, all helped to add to the occasion. Truly God has blessed us, and encouraged us to go forward into the coming year with a greater zeal to serve him faithfully, who came “not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His Life a Ransom for many”.

Congratulations to two of our Sunday School Teachers, Mr Peter Morgan and Miss Joyce Rodman, who have recently announced their engagement. We wish them every happiness in the coming days.

Your sincere friend and Curate  
*D Churchman*

### **Excerpts from St Michaels's Notes**

December 20<sup>th</sup> 1951 was not only the day on which our Vicar (*Reverend P.H. Jones*) was Instituted by the Bishop of Chelmsford and Inducted by the Bishop of Colchester (acting in his capacity of Archdeacon), but it was notable on the occasion of the Bishop of Chelmsford's first visit to Braintree Parish Church since he recently came to this Diocese.

After the Institution, parishioners and Watford friends gathered in the Church Hall, and the Wardens took the opportunity of welcoming the Bishop to St Michael's. This personal contact with our Bishop will enable us to pray for him in his arduous duties.

***Excerpts from the Parish Magazine of St Michaels and St Pauls, January 1952, supplied by Lesley Davey***

## BELFRY BULLETIN

We have had some very enjoyable Service and Practice ringing although of late it has had to be more restricted to keep in line with the advice from the Church and Central Bellringers council.

On Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> November, we were hosts to a group taking part in the Essex Association of Change Ringers training day. Bradley Hill tutored this group learning to ring Plain Bob Minor.

Before the practice night, 29<sup>th</sup> November, Ellis Whitehouse conducted a Quarter Peal for the 1<sup>st</sup> time, it was 1260 changes of Plain Bob Minor in 40mins, ringing were Treble Josh Ashley, 2 Peter Smith, 3 Ellie Gray, 4 Debbie Hill, 5 Bradley Hill, 6 Ellis Whitehouse[c], Josh 1<sup>st</sup> on Treble to minor.

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> December, The Northern District of the Essex Association held their annual Carol Service at St. Michael's. After 45mins good ringing Revd. Nigel Adams conducted a traditional service of Lessons and Carols.

4 Carols and 1 Hymn with 5 passages from the Bible relating to the Christmas story. The Bible readings were done by representatives from the District Towers. The event was rounded off with some more enjoyable ringing.

A Quarter Peal was rung on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December:- 1 Debbie Hill, 2 Simon Ward, 3 James Green, 4 Vicki Chapman, 5 Peter Smith, 6 Bradley Hill, 7 Colin Chapman[c], 8 Ellis Whitehouse. 1260 changes Stedman Triples in 44 mins with Debbie, James and Bradley ringing their 1<sup>st</sup> in method.

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> December, we rang 1280 changes of Cambridge Surprise Major in 46mins. This was Bradley's 1<sup>st</sup> as conductor of Cambridge Surprise Major and Ellie's 1<sup>st</sup> Surprise Major on the Treble. Treble Ellie Gray, 2 Debbie Hill, 3 Peter Smith, 4 Pat

Cresshull, 5 Peter Chapman, 6 Simon Ward, 7 Ian Cresshull, 8 Bradley Hill. Peter Smith has now rung all the 10 bells to Quarters Peals since the refurbishment.

Before the Carols by candle light service on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December, a QP of 1259 changes Grandsire Caters rung in 46mins. This was Ellie's 1<sup>st</sup> trebling to Caters. Treble Ellie Gray, 2 Debbie Hill, 3 Pat Cesshull, 4 Peter Smith, 5 Vicki Chapman, 6 Simon Ward, 7 Ian Cresshull, 8 Bradley Hill, 9 Colin Chapman[c], 10 David Learmonth.

Prior to the 10am service on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December, we rang 720 changes of Cambridge Surprise Minor and 540 changes of St Clements College Bob Minor a QP in 39mins. Rung to celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday of Peter Childs, friend of the Braintree ringers. Treble Ellis Whitehouse, 2 Ellie Gray, 3 Debbie Hill, 4 Peter Smith, 5 James Green, 6 Bradley Hill[c] 1<sup>st</sup> mixed minor methods 2,3,6.

1<sup>st</sup> on Treble mixed minor methods. 1<sup>st</sup> conductor mixed minor methods.

In the evening prior to the Carols by Candle Light service:- 1280 changes of 10 different Doubles methods were rung in 40 mins. 1 Ellie Gray, 2 Peter Chapman, 3 James Green, 4 Debbie Hill, 5 Bradley Hill[c], 6 Peter Smith.

For Peter Chapman's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Most Doubles methods 2,4,5 and as conductor.

For the 10am Christmas Day Family Service we rang St. Nicholas Bob Doubles.

As you can see from the above there have been many 1<sup>st</sup> achievements in the Quarter Peals which shows the advances

that we are making. Congratulations to all of those passing these milestones.

## AWAY FROM THE TOWER

Peter was in a District Quarter Peal at Halstead on 27<sup>th</sup> November.

Bradley rang his 1<sup>st</sup> handbell Quarter Peal on 30<sup>th</sup> November.

He drove all the way to Bristol to ring a QP of a method he say's he does not like!!! [ he was visiting his sister Jodie ].

Bradley and Peter rang at St Nicolas Witham for a Christmas Service on 24<sup>th</sup> December.

Peter was in a family Peal attempt at St Andrews Biggleswade in memory of his older brother Alan



*Peter Smith*

## **Just for a Smile! – Snippets From Church Magazines.**

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be, 'What is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

Weight Watches will meet at 7.00pm at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

*Supplied by Marion Richardson*

## WEDNESDAY MORNINGS AT THE CHURCH HOUSE

If you've to pass the Church House on a Wednesday morning you may have noticed two very different activities taking place - the one being the ladies Bible study group and the other being my **Keep Fit** class.

A small but friendly group get together for this Laban Dance Fitness class at 10am on Wednesdays - primarily to have fun maintaining and improving fitness to music, but also to get out of the house, forget life's trials for a while and enjoy each other's company. Age is no barrier as everyone, including myself, is of retirement age and there is a wide range of abilities. No-one feels left behind as they can all work within their own capabilities. We warm up, stretch, do a short pulse raising section then put together a routine that is learnt over a period of a few weeks. Seated exercise is also included and of course we finish with a final stretch. The moves are simple but challenging and come together so that it feels like fun rather than 'exercise'.



About myself - I'm a Keep Fit Association (KFA) qualified teacher and trainer with over 40 years teaching experience. I love what I do and love it when others enjoy it too. Each week I make the 40-mile round trip from my home in Colchester to teach the class and I also teach online classes from home. My other passion is animals and wildlife, and I've been involved at Colchester Zoo on a voluntary basis for almost 14 years. I also love to travel, when circumstances permit.

Back to the class - we're not fitness fanatics, just folk who like to get a bit fitter in a fun way, release those all-important endorphins and leave with smiles on our faces. New members are always welcome and if you're free on Wednesday mornings, we'd love you to join us and help our small group to grow. It's only £7 per week and **your first class is free!**



We start again after Christmas on **12<sup>th</sup> January at 10am.**  
A bit of a chat first and we get started about 10.10am

For more information please give me a call.  
Mo Manby (07760 375816)  
Email: [maureenmanby@aol.com](mailto:maureenmanby@aol.com)

# JANUARY DIARY

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

Our YouTube services can be accessed via the Worship tab on the St Michael's Church website (or through the "St Michael's – Worship on the Web" YouTube channel). The latest service is also available through "St Michael's by Phone" currently updated on a

Tuesday – just dial 01376 333565 (phone calls charged at the local rate). Both the online and phone versions of the service are available throughout the week

## **2 Sunday**

10:00am Church Family Worship

## **4 Tuesday**

2:00pm Bible reading group in Church House

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

## **6 Thursday**

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study

## **9 Sunday**

8.00am Morning Prayer (Book of Common Prayer)

10:00am Junior Church (3-14s)

10:00am Morning Worship

6.30pm Evening Worship

## **11 Tuesday**

2:00pm Bible reading group in Church House

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

## **12 Wednesday**

2:00pm Meeting Point

## **13 Thursday**

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study

## **16 Sunday**

10:00am Junior Church (3-14s)

10:00am Holy Communion

6.30pm All-Age Tonight

## **17 Monday**

7:30pm White Horse Tavern: Bible group with Stephen Bailey

7.30pm Essentials course

## **18 Tuesday**

2:00pm Bible reading group in Church House

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

## **19 Wednesday**

2:00pm Meeting Point

## **20 Thursday**

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study

## **23 Sunday**

8.00am Holy Communion

10:00am Junior Church (3-14s)

10:00am Morning Worship

## **24 Monday (LINK SUBMISSION DUE)**

7:30pm White Horse Tavern: Bible group with Stephen Bailey

7.30pm Essentials course

## **25 Tuesday**

2:00pm Bible reading group in Church House

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

## **26 Wednesday**

2:00pm Meeting Point

## **27 Thursday**

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study

## **30 Sunday**

10:00am Junior Church (3-14s)

10:00am Morning Worship

6.30pm United Service featuring Hope House

## **31 Monday**

7:30pm White Horse Tavern: Bible group with Stephen Bailey

7.30pm Essentials course