

The LINK digital

February 2022



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

Challenging times

Dear Friends,

As I write this, I am very conscious that these are challenging times for many of us. The coronavirus pandemic is far from over, with the Omicron variant spreading more rapidly (though less severe in some cases). Many are suffering illness and the loss of loved ones. These are also challenging times economically, with expected increases in the cost of living.

At times like this, I find it so helpful to return to the Psalms. They provide "*medicine for the aching soul.*" Psalms like this ...

***"For the LORD is good;
his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations."*** (Psalm 100:5)

We can lean on God because he is **good** – he is uniquely perfect. And God loves us with a **steadfast love**, that is, a covenant love that endures forever – a love that never fails. He is faithful and loving to all generations, though each generation needs to discover God's love for themselves.

In these challenging times, can I encourage you to lean more on God ... to come to him each day in prayer ... to know the steadfast love of our good and faithful God.

We are continuing to meet in church for services each Sunday, and Junior Church in Church House, and details are included at the back of this LINK magazine and on the weekly Notice Sheet. Please join us if you are able to. We also have the main services uploaded later to YouTube and "St Michael's by Phone" for those who are unable to join us for any reason.

May I also commend to you a whole church course we are having during the period of Lent called **“Living Christianity”** which is about *“following Jesus in every area of life.”* It will run on five Mondays from 28th February, 7.30pm on Zoom. Details are on the Notice Sheet. You would be most welcome to join us for it.

Wishing you every blessing,

Nigel



MISSION OF THE MONTH

Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS)

CPAS is an evangelical Anglican mission agency working mainly with local Anglican churches across the United Kingdom. They are patrons to many hundreds of churches including ours, and have an input into the appointment of ministers. They train ministers and also run courses for churches and PCC groups. They organise and run about 60 young peoples house parties and camps.

The mission of the CPAS is to inspire and enable Anglican churches to reach everyone in their communities with the good news of Jesus Christ.

CPAS values - what are the core beliefs that govern how they behave?

Bible - God's written word, our supreme authority.

Excellence - God's standards as our standards in all we do.

Relevance - God's answers to today's questions.

Prayer - God's power energizing every ministry.

Community - God's grace made real in our relationships.

Prophetic - God's future for His church.

CPAS vision - Where are they going?

CPAS will inspire, encourage and challenge churches to be good news for all by:

- Building worshipping communities for all ages
- Equipping ministry for all ages
- Enabling outreach for all ages

CPAS strategy - How is the vision going to become reality?

- Through communicating their vision and listen to feedback
- Develop and maintain mutually supportive partnerships to equip and train God's church
- Identify, develop and provide dynamic, enabling resources.

This month we pray especially for the work of organising and finding volunteer leaders and helpers for the many camps and house parties that will take place during the summer months. We also pray that God's Holy Spirit will touch the youngsters that go to these camps and house parties and that they may learn more about Jesus.

If you feel able to become a leader or a helper at a house party or if you know of any child or young person who would benefit from attending such a camp or house party then please contact Nigel our vicar or Rachel our children's & youth worker.

Derek Chapman is St Michael's rep for CPAS

LOCAL HERO

His parents were too poor to clothe and feed him. They, therefore, decided to send him – eighteen months old – from Kelvedon to Stambourne to be looked after up by his grandparents. That was in 1835. Charles Haddon Spurgeon remembered his 1830's childhood in a manse in this north Essex village.

His grandfather was the pastor of the Independent Chapel in the village. His shelves were full of books, but not of the kind that made easy reading for this infant boy. They were written by men from the golden age of Bible teachers and Bible learners, the seventeenth century. Charles got down those books and even tried to read them. Many of them must have been too hard for him to grapple with, but one stood for him as it did for so many others. It was '*the Pilgrim's Progress*'.

Time came for him to move back into his parent's home.

THE FATEFUL SNOW STORM

One winter Sunday morning in January 1850, there was a heavy fall of snow in Colchester where the teenage Charles was now living. He could not get the chapel where he normally worshipped, the snow being too deep. So he slipped into a tiny Primitive Methodist chapel. Because the one who was to preach was prevented from coming by the weather, the service was taken by someone in the congregation. All he could say without any embellishment were words, 'Look unto the Lord and you will live'. And then, shock/horror, he turned to Charles and said, '*Young man, look to Jesus Christ. Look, look, look! You have nothing to do but look and live!*'

Charles Haddon Spurgeon reckoned that was the moment he was converted and became a Christian.

HERO?

What is so special about this boy? Many things: he founded a college to train pastors. He set up houses for destitute boys and girls which proved to be warm homes in every sense for poor children in Victorian south London.

His ministry filled the Metropolitan Tabernacle to capacity (5000) each Sunday for over thirty years. His congregation out grew New Park Street Chapel, Southwark. That's why they built the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Out of that number many were converted to Jesus Christ.

A SMILE TO YOUR LIPS

Obviously Spurgeon came from what we call 'humble stock'. He was not 'college educated', nor lived in the pathways of the established church and yet he was used by God to the conversion of thousands in a world and time that is tougher than the 21st century. He was obviously a man made and used by God. Many thank God for him and that makes them smile, and they are praying that the Lord Jesus Christ will do what he is very good at – that he will give us a twenty-first century Spurgeon.

Stephen Bailey

FARMING SEASON

So far we have had a generally mild winter although more lately the weather has been a bit more seasonal. Potentially cold, frosty weather generally knocks the crops back so the mild weather has enabled them to keep growing through the winter. The only concern has been the very wet spells of weather which has caused some problems in the parts of the field which are less well drained particularly on the headlands. Our weather does seem to be more and more unpredictable so who knows what we will get in February? On the farm we have started moving some of our wheat harvested last summer. This wheat sold will be exported and shipped from Ipswich.

The reason I call this article Farming Seasons is because we are not only looking at the farming year but also the previous generations in my farming family. This month I am looking at the lives of my grandparents on my fathers side. In a previous article I explained how my grandfather originally bought the farm and farm house in 1919 when he was just 17 years old (not 18 as mentioned before). His father had two sons and was himself a farmer in Felsted. My grandfather was the eldest of his two sons and he was given money by his father to buy the farm and the farmhouse which we now live in. It is difficult to imagine how times were in 1919, but after World War 1 and during the flu pandemic it must have been very tough. It did, however, provide the opportunity for my grandfather to buy the farm which was a lot in the sale of the Abbots Hall Estate. This was an auction sale and would undoubtedly have created much interest at the time. I have always had the impression that my grandfather was a strong individual and his father was keen for him to work independently. His younger brother then later went on to inherit the family farm in Felsted.



CYRIL GROVE SMITH

My grandfather was born in 1902 and died when I was 18, which means with this scant information you can't work out my age! I best remember him for teaching and playing draughts with me. I believe he left school in Braintree at the age of 14, when he would have gone to work on the farm during World War 1. It's hard to believe he took on a farm by himself at just 17, but when you consider the times, young men must have been required to grow up quickly and work! The work then would have been very physical and hard with limited mechanisation to help. Although my grandfather had relatively little education he was a very keen farmer and we still have his small library of farming books in the book cabinet in our house. We also believe he kept chickens in some of the down stair rooms of our house when he started, something he was proud to tell people later on in life. At the age of 25 he contracted double pneumonia in the month of May, which almost killed him. This is why he was always fond of the old saying 'Ne'er cast a clout till May be out' because he believed he caught a chill when he was working out in the fields. His early years of farming were tough and in the depression years of the 1930s he would have run out of money if it were not

for the kind support of a fellow farmer he met at the corn exchange.

Together with my grandmother, Vera Smith, to whom some people at St Michael's may remember, they had two sons in the 1930s, the younger being my father. During the Second World War farmers like my grandfather were under intense pressure to produce food and meet their quotas for the war effort on the home front. They had a prisoner of war whom they called Charlie who helped during this period and for a time after, and my grandfather kept in contact with him afterwards. My father then continued to keep in contact with his son, Heinz, who has visited us and I have stayed at his house in Germany.

After this troubled period life resumed back to normality and farming fortunes improved. My grandfather was interested in most aspects of farming but specialized in pig production and producing grass seed. After the war there would have been a renewed interest in the industry and the governments at the time were keen to make our agricultural industry as productive and competitive as it could be. Grandfather went on many farming trips including Denmark with a particular interest in Danish bacon. Grass seed was perhaps his most lucrative venture and required specific knowledge and equipment. Some of the grass seed at the time was exported to America and my grandfather used his seed to create the playing field in Shalford. He was on the village hall management committee for 30 years.

Other than farming my Grandfather was interested in photography and travelling and the two went well together. In our house he used to have a film room which is now Rachel's office. Both my grandparents were Christians and regular church goers at the old Congregational Church in Shalford, which my grandfather helped build (I still have the original

plans). For them, working on Sundays was always strictly forbidden and this would sometimes get my father in trouble.

My Nana, as I knew her, was also from a farming family and her father's farm was on St Andrews airfield in Saling which was requisitioned for the war effort in the Second World War for the military air base. I am told the farm house was used to hold prisoners of war and demolished afterwards. She was always heavily involved in the farming business and used to have her own small orchard. She went on to help my father in his farming business too. I remember my Nana as a very keen Christian who read the bible everyday and she told me she would always pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance. I used to take her to a bible study group in Felsted but when this stopped she wanted me to continue going to a younger group which is when she contacted St Michael's Church, over twenty years ago, and ended up speaking to David Huxter about me joining his group, which is how I first became acquainted with St Michaels!

Adam Grove Smith

DO YOU BELONG TO THE LOSERS?

As children we played for hours a card game called Top Trumps. Each player received a number of cards – so the game could begin. Whose turn it was would ask the others about the metric dimensions of a car. The cards with the highest speed and strongest engine would win. Soon we got the message which cards were preferred as they would over trump the others. There were of course also cards which always came last, these everyone liked to pass on.

In society human beings are also measured according to certain criteria. Some get recognition and are cheered because they are successful and revered. Others who have nothing to show that is important in the world will hardly be noticed.

With Jesus Christ these standards are of no value. He came as a human being into the world some 2000 years ago in order to save sinners. His grace was particularly for people from margin groups and the ones who could not show any religious merits. What He said at the time is still valid today: ***“All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.”*** (John 6:37)

The Lord Jesus will accept everyone who comes to Him with a botched life. He died on the cross so we can have a new beginning with Him. He only asks us to truly confess our sins and believe that He has given His life for our salvation.

Translated from the Swiss Calendar by Peter Schaad

CHURCH FAMILY WORSHIP 2022.

Our theme for 2022 is QUESTIONS!

A reminder that each month we will be considering a question usually asked by Jesus

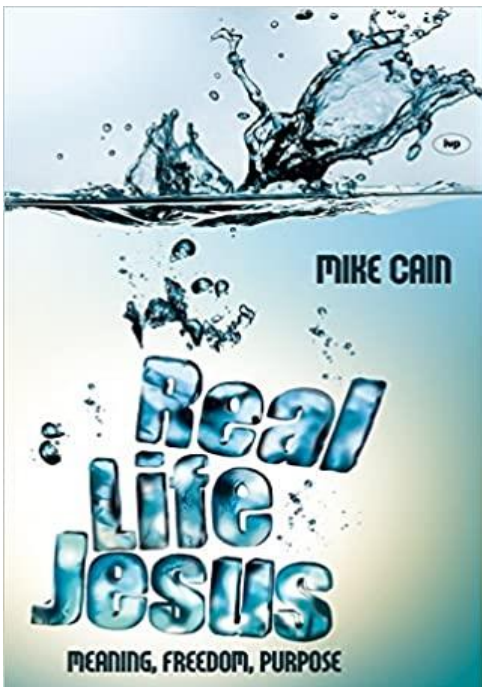
At February CFW Nigel Adams will be answering the question from John Chapter 1 verse 35 where Jesus asks two of John's disciples :

'What are you seeking?'

Come and find out the answer!

(CFW 10am in St Michael's Church on February 6th 2022)

And a Book Review



Real Life Jesus by Mike Cain

This book tells us or rather encourages us to look at Jesus: the real life version ...not our imagined version or a caricature.

Sections of John's Gospel are used to show us the 'real life Jesus.' We are

introduced to Jesus. Exciting to read!

The book would make an excellent gift for someone who is asking questions about Jesus.

I have a copy that you can look at and am able to order copies if you would like me to.
It cost's £7.50 or £6.50 if 10 people make an order!

Here's a QUESTION I HAVE RECEIVED.....*How do you know when God is speaking to you?*

If anyone would like to contribute an answer please email me and I will collate answers for next month's LINK
So all the questions that you have... 2022 is the year to get them answered!

Please ...lots more questions!

Two questions asked by children at Experience Christmas:

(1) Can we see God?

(2) Why does St Michael's have two Gods...Jesus and God?

What would you have said?

Jennifer Bailey

70 YEARS AGO – THE LIFE OF OUR CHURCH

THE VICAR'S LETTER

How often we hear people say, at the end of a discussion when neither has been convinced by the point of view of the other, "Well, I suppose it is a matter of opinion". This may often be true, but we need to beware lest the opinion is based upon our own reactions, or desires, or wishes. We are in grave danger of making ourselves the ultimate court of appeal in all matters of right and wrong.

This attitude becomes fatal when it is brought into the realm of Christian thought and action, for who are we to decide what is right or wrong in the sight of God, or to judge eternal issues by the standards of time? Obviously we are not able to decide what is acceptable to God unless we have a standard outside ourselves to which we can appeal in all matters of faith and practice. This standard has been given to us by God in his Word, the Bible, and the only way in which we can reach a conclusion which will be of value in Eternity is to base our thoughts and action upon that which God has Himself revealed to us from Eternity. In other words, we can only think and act rightly if we start with the assumption that God has revealed His Will to us in His Word.

To the end that we might each be a true student of God's Word I would make four suggestions:

1. Read God's Word every day.
2. Carry your Bible with you to Church and use it to follow the Lessons and refer to it in the sermon for how else can you know if the preacher speaks truth?
3. Set aside a little time each month to consider carefully the Bible Studies in the magazine.

4. Set aside an evening each week in Lent for the Parish Bible Study which we shall have.

Your sincere friend and Vicar,
Peter James

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

BELFRY BULLETIN

Into a New Year and it was time to set our aims for the Guild and individuals for the coming months. There was quite a mix of ideas from old favourites and new methods and some quirky ideas. One was from Debbie Hill, our Deputy Master, to ring a Quarter Peal facing the walls which means you cannot see the other ringers or their ropes. UM!!!

Now for the things we have achieved.

Wednesday 29th December 2021 Jodie Hill rang her 1st Quarter Peal at her 1st attempt jointly conducted by Debbie, her mother, and her brother Bradley.

1260 changes of Plain Bob Doubles Jodie Hill 1, Peter Smith 2, Ellie Gray 3, Bradley Hill (c) 4, Debbie Hill (c) 5, Maurice Downs 6.



To celebrate the end of 2021 on Friday 3^{1st} December 2021 1260 changes in 40mins 4 minor methods were rung Little Bob, Cambridge Surprise, St Clements and Plain Bob. Ellie Gray 1, Vicky Elliot 2, Debbie Hill 3 , Jim Green 4 , Peter Chapman 5, Bradley Hill [c] 6.



During the last 5 month's of 2021 we rang 19 Quarter Peals at St Michael's 11 for services with 24 1st time achievements.

This is an excellent record WELL DONE Everyone.

Then to welcome 2022 on Sunday 2nd January 2022 in 42mins 1260 changes of 5 Doubles methods Grandsire, All Saints, St Martins, St Simons and Plain Bob.

Jodie Hill 1, Debbie Hill 2, Jim Green 3, Ian Cresshull 4, Bradley Hill[c] 5, Lin Ould 6

And then because we could on Monday 3rd January 1288 of St Simons Bob Triples in 43mins Simon Ward 1, Debbie Hill 2, Kath Downs 3, Jim Green 4, Peter Smith 5, Vicki Elliot 6, Bradley Hill [c] 7, Maurice Downs 8.

1st blows in the method 2, 3, 7, and as conductor 7.

Wednesday 5th January 1260 Plain Bob Minor Jodie Hill 1, Peter Smith 2, Jim Green 3, Peter Chapman 4, Bradley Hill 5, Debbie Hill [c] 6

Jodie's 1st trebling to minor.

Friday 7th Jan. 60 changes of Stedman, 240 Grandsire, 240 Reverse Canterbury, 240 All Saints, 240 St. Simons and 240 Plain Bo Doubles Debbie Hill 1, Jim Green 2, Peter Smith 3, Simon Ward 4, Bradley Hill [c] 5, Lin Ould 6.

Saturday 8th January 2022 1260 changes of Plain Bob Royal was rung in 47mins

Pat Cresshull 1, John Taylor 2, Debbie Hill 3, Jim Green 4, Peter Smith 5, Roy Threadgold 6, Vicki Elliot 7, Ian Cresshull 8, Simon Ward 9, Bradley Hill[c] 10.

This QP was rung on EACR Northern District 101st Annual District Meeting and rung by the Master 9, Deputy Master 10, Secretary 8, Treasurer 7 and 2 past District Masters 6 and 5.



This was the 100th Quarter Peal to be rung celebrate the centenary of the forming of the Northern District in 2019.

For a Birthday treat Ellis Whitehouse conducted a Quarter Peal of St Clements college Bob Minor for 1st time on Monday 10th January. Jim Green 1, Ellie Gray 2, Peter Smith 3, Debbie Hill 4, Bradley Hill 5, Ellis Whitehouse[c] 6.

Due to Guild members having Covid 19 our bells were silent on Sunday 16th January 2022

Before the 10am Service on Sunday 23rd Jan. we assemble to ring 1260 changes of Plain Bob Royal in 48mins Ellis Whitehouse 1, Ellie Gray 2, Debbie Hill 3, Pat Cresshull 4, Jim Green 5, Ian Cresshull 6, Peter Smith 7, Simon Ward 8, Alistair Donaldson 9, Bradley Hill[c] 10. This was Ellie's 1st Royal QP inside.

AWAY FROM THE TOWER

Ellis Whitehouse rang for Christmas at Overbury in Worcestershire.

Jodie and Bradley Hill rang a QP at Kelvedon on Sunday 2nd Jan then returned on 4th Jan with Debbie to ring another one.

Peter Smith rang a QP at Witham for their Epiphany Service

Bradley rang 4 QP's on Saturday 22nd Jan all 1st all 1st blows in the method

Peter was made a Life Member of West Anglian Guild on 19th January.

Peter Smith

Just for a Smile! – Snippets From Church Magazines.

Potluck supper Sunday at 5:00pm – prayer and meditation to follow

This evening at 7:00pm there will be hymn singing in the park across the church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

Low Self Esteem Group will meet Thursday at 7:00pm. Please use the back door.

The pastor of the church would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.

Supplied by Marion Richardson

Church and Church House Work Party

12 February 2022 from 9:00 AM.

Want to help? Speak/email Dave Marriott or Lin Terris,
so we can plan a safe and practical day.

This will be done to government guidelines on gatherings at the time.

There will be no catering (however we might do a takeaway on the
day if sufficient people are there!)
and if possible bring your own tools.

Jobs include:

Winter garden clear.

Litter pick of site

Painting—Upstairs corridor

Signage—All the room layouts and
new notices

Clearing gutters / drains

Clearing / recycling from all rooms

Internal window clean

Clearing parts of church to enable
repairs.

Going to the recycling centre!



FEBRUARY DIARY

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

1 Tuesday

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

2 Wednesday

10.00am Meeting Point

3 Thursday

11:00am Coffee@Home on Zoom with Nigel & Jo Adams

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study

6 Sunday

9:00am Next Plus Breakfast (14-18s)

10:00am Church Family Worship

6.30pm Holy Communion

7 Monday

7:30pm Bell Ringing

8 Tuesday

8:00pm First Priority prayer meeting on Zoom

9 Wednesday

10.00am Meeting Point

10 Thursday

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study

12 Saturday

9:00am Church & Church House Work Party

13 Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion

9:00am Next Plus Breakfast (14-18s)

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

10:00am Morning Worship

14 Monday

7:30pm Bell Ringing

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

15 Tuesday

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

17 Thursday

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study

20 Sunday

9:00am Next Plus Breakfast (14-18s)

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

10:00am Morning Worship

6.30pm All-Age Tonight

21 Monday (LINK SUBMISSION DUE)

7:30pm Bell Ringing

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

22 Tuesday

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

23 Wednesday

10.00am Meeting Point

24 Thursday

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study

27 Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion

9:00am Next Plus Breakfast (14-18s)

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

10:00am Morning Worship

28 Monday

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm Living Christianity (Zoom meeting)