

The LINK

digital

January 2023



*Verse of
the Year*
2023



*Let us hold unswervingly
to the hope we profess, for
he who promised is
faithful.*

Hebrews 10:23

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



HAPPY NEW YEAR

Dear Friends,

I don't know how you will be feeling, as we embark on a New Year, but I hope it will be a Happy New Year for you. In our fallen and broken world, there are sadly no guarantees that our lives will always be happy. At times, tough things happen to us and bad things happen to good people.

But as we begin the New Year, our Verse of the Year reminds us of a helpful truth ...

"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful." (Hebrews 10:23)

It reminds us that whatever happens, whatever life throws at us, we have a faithful God whose promises in Scripture can be completely relied upon ... God is uniquely faithful.

Much earlier in the Bible, we are told that God is completely different to human beings ...

***God is not man, that he should lie,
or a son of man, that he should change his mind.
Has he said, and will he not do it?
Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfil it? (Numbers 23:19)***

As we approach this New Year, let us do so “holding unswervingly to the hope we profess” ... trusting that God is faithful ... that God will work all things together for good (Romans 8:28).

Wishing you every blessing for the New Year,

Nigel



MISSION OF THE MONTH

A ROCHA

A Rocha (which means 'The Rock') was founded in The Algarve, Portugal in 1983 as a field study centre by Peter and Miranda Harris. Since then it has grown and there are now two branches of A Rocha:

A Rocha UK operates the Eco Church programme in England and Wales. They collaborate and coordinate with Eco-Congregation Scotland, and Eco-Congregation Ireland, both of which are independent organisations. On Sunday 29th January, Nigel will be preaching about "Caring for God's Creation" at our Eco Church Sunday, encouraging us to think about how we can care better for God's creation both as a church and as individuals.

A Rocha UK's Partner in Action programme is taking action to improve biodiversity, address climate change and make a real difference to nature restoration in the UK.

A Rocha's Wild Christian programme is for individuals and families who want to enjoy and learn about nature together, and also take practical action at home and in their local areas, and join with other voices for national impact.

A Rocha UK's Foxearth Meadows reserve, near Sudbury is a great small place for people and nature. In summer there are many dragonflies and damselflies in this peaceful refuge.

A Rocha UK and International were involved in both COP27 and COP15 summits this year. COP27 disappointingly failed to agree a phase out of fossil fuels, and the aim to reach a 1.5 degrees reduction looks remote. But despite this it is essential to keep putting pressure on our government to take the lead in climate action.

COP15 (the UN biodiversity summit) held in Montreal in December did achieve some positives: including a pledged \$200bn of biodiversity related funding; and a commitment to protect 30% of land and sea globally has been enshrined in international law.

A Rocha International is a global family of conservation organizations working together to care for God's creation. Through residential field study centres and site-based projects they carry out ecological monitoring and research in areas of high value for wildlife. They support Christians for environmental action through conservation project, resources for churches and involvement in global networks. They encourage appreciation of nature and participation in its conservation, through environmental education and community outreach.

A Rocha International operates in more than 20 countries across 6 continents.

The world's most wildlife-rich sites are still being destroyed or degraded at a frightening rate. A Rocha International have established an African Forest programme to conserve 50,000 hectares of threatened forest across Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya; And a Marine Conservation programme to protect oceans and support the people who depend on them.

They are identifying and training key speakers, creating and curating on line resources, engaging influential theological institutions, disseminating church engagement programmes and multiplying A Rocha's reach through partnerships with global networks to help embed creation care in both the local churches and global movements.

Each year A Rocha involves thousands of people of all ages and many faiths, in activities, which introduce them to local and global issues. Please pick up a copy of Root and Branch magazine from

the back of church – this covers mainly the UK and is a great and informative read.

The websites... for A Rocha UK: <https://arocha.org.uk/>
& A Rocha International: <https://arocha.org/en/>

Both websites are well worth reading and are encouraging by showing what a small organisation can do to help preserve this wonderful world which God has given us to enjoy, not destroy!

Ann Mahood - St Michael's rep for A Rocha

HOGMANAY

On Hogmanay, Jim was sent out with piece of coal to be the 'first foot' in the neighbours' houses. Despite being English, he was an ideal man to be the 'first foot'. He was tall and dark, and to his credit he had married a Scots girl (let's call her Florence).

After the clock had struck twelve, Jim was sent out to knock on nearby doors. He would be welcomed in with his piece of coal because he was supposed to be bringing good luck for the coming year.

Florence had taken Jim all the way north to be introduced to her acquaintances, having chosen the end of December and early January for her holiday. The tall dark Englishman was a popular candidate for the custom of 'first footing'

DID IT WORK?

Did he bring good luck? Possibly not: for in less than two years, Britain was at war with Germany. Jim, and the men who welcomed him into their homes, were called up to fight in World War 2. Some didn't come home. Others, including Jim, did come home. Was it down to good luck?

NOT INSIDE BUT OUTSIDE

Jim stepped over the threshold neighbours' houses and went in. Jesus stepped over threshold of his tomb and stepped out, not into a new year, but into a new life. Later he met his twelve friends and said to them, '*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me...*' (Matthew 28:18 ESV)

FICKLE LUCK OR CERTAINTY?

One thing we can be certain of, in 2023, is that all the events of the next twelve months are in our Lord Jesus Christ's hand. Some will be good and some will be bad. Satan and the forces of evil will try to mess up the next twelve months. They will initiate all that is bad. But they cannot overcome the risen and reigning Lord Jesus Christ. To encourage us, he caused it to be written, *'...for those who love God all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose'* (Romans 8:28).

Logically then, it is better to trust the Lord Jesus than fickle and powerless so called good luck.

Happy New Year.

Stephen Bailey

FARMING SEASONS



At the time of writing it is just before Christmas and the weather has recently turned wet and mild, and it looks set to continue for the festive period. I have to admit Cherry and myself enjoyed the week long cold snap in the middle of December, which brought temperatures as low as minus eight in the countryside and a good covering of snow. Our walks over the fields took on a new level of interest admiring the beautiful winter scenery. What's interesting about walking in the snow is you can see all the animal tracks including from the foxes, badgers and deer revealing their living places and where they move about. Perhaps more interesting for me as Cherry has her nose to tell her all this information anyway! The snow itself is useful to the small crops as it protects them from the hard frosts.

Recently in a church service Nigel was looking to interview a farmer during his sermon and he chose me. One of the questions he asked me was '*what is good about being a Christian farmer?*'. The key to my answer was to look at why I am actually a farmer. I am fortunate to be a farmer because I inherited the land from

my father, who in turn inherited land from my grandfather, who bought the original farm in 1919 at the young age of just 18 years old. My grandfather was a Christian and he believed throughout his life that God had given him his opportunities, so his opportunities have become my opportunities. God's plan is incomprehensible but His promise is simple, and knowing our future is certain with Jesus is more important than any harvest here on Earth.

Of course that does not mean that our jobs are not important and the trials and tribulations in our lives are not real and sometimes difficult. Christmas is a time which can be hard for many people and this year neither of my parents will be around. My mother died after harvest time and this Christmas she will be greatly missed. We would often talk about the crops and weather and how the farm was doing. Like farming, our lives have many seasons and the New Year will present us with new opportunities and challenges but the past memories remind us that our own stories are part of a much greater picture.

Adam Grove Smith

TOP 20 FAVOURITE CHRISTIAN SONGS

You might realise that St Michael's church pays a copyright fee to legally play and sing any song or hymn written in the last 50 years. Each month we need to report what we have sung, words we have printed or displayed and music copied, as do churches across the UK so writers can be remunerated.

CCLI, who manage the licence, have published a list of the top 100 songs, and I thought you'd like to see what's being sung across the country, so have here listed the top 20. Most of these are already in our repertoire (* indicates we don't sing it).



It's good to know that churches across Britain are worshipping God with songs which express the gospel so well.

So, here's the run-down:

- 20. Great are you Lord *
- 19. King of Kings, Majesty
- 18. Hosanna (Praise is Rising)
- 17. Yet Not I, but Through Christ in me

16. Amazing Grace (My Chains are gone)
15. Be Still
14. Way Maker*
13. The Lord's my Shepherd – the Townend version
12. Build my Life*
11. How Deep the Father's Love for us
10. Living Hope*
9. What a Beautiful Name*
8. How Great Thou Art
7. This is Amazing Grace*
6. Goodness of God*
5. Cornerstone *
4. O Praise the Name (Anastasis)
3. The Splendour of the King
2. 10,000 reasons
1. In Christ Alone

If you want to explore the top 100 visit

<https://www.worshipfuel.com/ccli-top-100/?list=uk>

Jonathan Wicks

BELFRY BULLETIN



This is us, well most of us, at our 2022 Christmas Party - the first time we have been able to celebrate together (since 2019) due to Covid restrictions. We were at The Bell in Panfield where we had a nice meal, in comfortable surroundings. The cracker jokes were up to standard with The Snowman going to dance at the Snowball! It was a very happy and enjoyable evening with everyone in fine form.

THANK YOU LIN OULD FOR THE ORGANISATION

We were pleased to welcome Jenny and Mike Hastings to ring with us for the 10am service on Sunday 11th December. Jenny was a Guild member in the 1970's and rang in the first Peal following the augmentation to 10 bells in 1972.

We are planning to ring for most Christmas services and at the time of writing, this is how we are getting on...

For Candlelight Carols on Sunday 18th December 2022
1260 Grandsire Triples in 44mins
Treble Debbie Hill, 2 Pat Cresshull, 3 Jim Green,
4 Ellis Whitehouse, 5 Simon Ward,

6 Bradley Hill, 7 Ian Cresshull[c], Tenor Peter Smith.

Monday 19th December before practice night

1260 Grandsire Doubles in 40mins

Treble Debbie Hill[c], 2 Jim Green, 3 Jodie Hill,

4 Bradley Hill, 5 Peter Smith, 6 Simon Ward.

This was Jodies 1st in method and her 25th QP

WELL DONE JODIE

Thursday 22nd December 2022

1260 changes of Grandsire Triples in 47mins

Treble Jim Green, 2 Ellis Whitehouse, 3 Jodie Hill,

4 Debbie Hill, 5 Peter Smith,

6 David Newton, 7 Simon Ward[c], Tenor Bradley Hill.

Jodie's 1st QP of Grandsire Triples.

This is Debbie's 300th QP on Tower Bells, Congratulations Debbie!

AWAY FROM THE TOWER

3rd December Jodie Hill rang her first Peal at her first attempt a great achievement. One of many?

4th December Peter a Quarter Peal of Plain bob Major at Witham for their Patronal Festival.

6th December Peter rang 2 QP's with the Golden Oldies, 1 for the Feast Day of St Nicholas.

Every Tuesday evening Debbie and Bradley Hill with Jim Green and Simon Ward practice method handbell ringing and are close to ringing QP's.

17th December Peter was in a Quarter Peal at St Nicolas Witham for the Carol Service.

Bradley has been on two holidays, first to Edinburgh with the other climbing in the Lake District and did not do any ringing on either. WHAT!

22nd December Peter was seen fleetingly on BBC2 in Celebrity Antiques Road Trip ringing the bells at Henham. Hollywood here we come!

Peter Smith

BROKEN FOR A PURPOSE?

“And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she broke the box, and poured it on his head.” (Mark 14:3)

This is the touching story of how Jesus was anointed before His crucifixion. But there's one thing about this passage that stood out to me as I read it again. Jesus was not anointed with ointment until the box of alabaster was broken! In the same way, we must be broken before the Lord so that His anointing can be poured out upon us to touch others!

We should never be ashamed to be broken. God will not deny a broken heart and a contrite spirit! When we humble ourselves in His sight and place our pride on the altar of sacrifice, it is then that God's anointing will be greatest upon us. It will pour out of us like the ointment from that box - and we will be used greatly for His kingdom!

Let us ask the Lord to break us where we need to be broken this week so that we might be anointed completely to do the great things He's called us to do!

Supplied by Peter Schaad from The Worthy Brief



Oasis@StMichael's

an informal Bereavement Support Group

Meets monthly on a Thursday, 2pm until 3.30pm
in St Michael's Church House (Small Hall)
St Michael's Lane, CM7 1EY

2023 dates: 26th January, 23rd February, 23rd March
27th April, 25th May, 22nd June

If you would like to know more, please contact:
Jo Adams (01376 807662), Derek Chapman,
Margaret Kinniburgh or Margaret St John-Coleman



Oasis@StMichael's: Jan-Jun 2023
an informal Bereavement Support Group

COFFEE CHAT WITH ROGER COOKE



Third Monday coffee and conversation

I shall be in the Quadrant cafe on **16th January at 10.30am** so if you'd like to join me you'd be very welcome!

Looking forward to seeing you.

Roger Cooke

Never give up on God. He never gives up on you

Every day read your Bible

With prayers and thanksgiving let your requests be known to God

You are precious in His sight

Every one you know should know you follow Christ

Always go to God for help first, not last

Rely on your Church Family

Remember those around you who need you and act

Every day praise the Lord for something

See that you go to church regularly

Only do good

Let your words be useful and not damaging

Understand your faith better through Bible Study

Try tithing; He loves a cheerful giver

Involve yourself in your church and community

Others deserve to know God; you are his conduit

Never give up on the faith

Anonymous

2023 WORK PARTY DATES

Sat 11 Feb – Winter tidy up, start redecorating of the next couple of rooms in church house (Counselling room and the Small hall would be priority)

Sat 1 April – Spring tidy and early garden tidy, complete one room of Church House.

Sat 29 April – Late spring garden tidy. Start next room of decoration of Church House.

Sat 3 June – Small Hall redecoration exploration.

Sat 22 July – Small Hall redecoration started properly.

Sat 2 Sept – Preparing buildings for Autumn return

Sat 21 Oct – Leaf drop gutter clearance and tidy out ahead of light party and electrical work (our 5 year electrical certificate is up at this point)

All of these include checking the Gutters/drainage on the Church!



A PHOTO OF ST MICHAEL'S NATIVITY TABLEAU



ST MICHAEL'S PIPE ORGAN

JANUARY DIARY
www.stmichaelsbtrees.co.uk

Our YouTube services can be accessed through the “St Michael’s – Worship on the Web” YouTube channel and are generally updated during the week after the Sunday service

1 Sunday

10:00am Family Service

2 Monday

7:30pm Bell Ringing

5 Thursday

10-12noon Coffee@StMichael's (in church)

8 Sunday

8:00am Holy Communion

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

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

10:00am Morning Worship

9 Monday

7:30pm Hope Explored (Church House)

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)

10 Tuesday

1:15pm Tiddlywinks

8.00pm First Priority Prayer Meeting on Zoom

11 Wednesday

10.00am Meeting Point

12 Thursday

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

15 Sunday

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

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

10:00am Holy Communion

6:30pm All-Age Tonight

16 Monday

10:30am Coffee Chat with Roger Cooke @Quadrant

7:30pm Hope Explored (Church House)

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)

17 Tuesday

1:15pm Tiddlywinks

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

18 Wednesday

10.00am Meeting Point

19 Thursday

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

22 Sunday

8:00am Holy Communion

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

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

10:00am Morning Worship

23 Monday

7:30pm Hope Explored (Church House)

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)

24 Tuesday (LINK SUBMISSION DUE)

1:15pm Tiddlywinks

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

25 Wednesday

10.00am Meeting Point

26 Thursday

2:00pm Oasis@StMichael's – an informal Bereavement Support Group (Small Hall in Church House)

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

29 Sunday

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

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

10:00am Holy Communion

6:30pm United Service @Cornerstone, Black Notley (CYO focus)

30 Monday

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)

31 Tuesday

1:15pm Tiddlywinks

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