

The LINK

March 2023



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

THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVOURITE THINGS

Dear Friends,

Hairspray, coffee, a labelling machine, halloumi, and roasted vegetable wraps (which I only discovered this week!)...‘these are a few of my favourite things’ (as Julie Andrews would sing).

I wonder... what are some of your favourite things? Well, much more seriously, I have a burning passion, which many of you will know about me. I have a real heart for young people and long for them to hear the Gospel clearly explained to them. In this broken and damaged world, children and young people need to know the Good News about Jesus. And if we do not tell them, how will they know? I echo the words for the Psalmist... “We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done.” Psalm 78 v 4.

There is tremendous hope in the Gospel – whoever we are and whatever we have done.

God the Father sent Jesus his Son to live here on earth; he lived a perfect life, taught many, performed incredible miracles and is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. At Easter, we remember when Jesus died on the cross for our sins so that we can know complete and full forgiveness and be set free from the weight of sin and ultimately death. Jesus’ death and resurrection has meant that the sinful barrier, that separates us from God, has been broken and we can now live in relationship with Him. When we put our faith and trust in Jesus, the Holy Spirit lives within us and we can know the sure and certain hope that one day we will meet our Maker and spend eternity with Him.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not die but have eternal life.” John 3 v 16

This week I discovered a new song by Emu Music, titled Apostles' Creed. The link is here...[Apostles' Creed // Emu Music - YouTube](#)
My hope and prayer is that over this period of Lent, lives in Braintree will be transformed and that this will be the song of so many in our community.

I am very excited to share with you SMASH news!!

So, our Saint Michael's Alternative Spring Holiday Club is in the diary between the 3rd and the 5th April 2023. This year we will again run the club for three longer days (rather than five shorter ones). Each day the children will join us between 9.30am and 12.30pm.

Subsequent family events (SMASH Extra) will continue to take place throughout 2023.

For each day of SMASH there will be much excitement, energy and enthusiasm! There will be daily Bible stories, drama sketches/puppets, Bible studies, crafts and games!

This year the title is 'The Restoration Station' using 'The Repair Shop' idea. The children will become crafters at workbenches and each day we explore how Jesus has restored different people. So, the plan for the week is as follows...

Monday 3rd April (Day 1) – Jesus meets a very important man – John 4: 46 – 53

Tuesday 4th April (Day 2) – Jesus meets a man who can't walk – John 5: 1 – 13

Wednesday 5th April (Day 3) – Jesus restores Peter – John 21: 3 – 17

On Sunday 9th April, we hope to welcome many to our Easter Family Praise service.

We would really value your prayers as we continue to plan for SMASH and as people sign up (Details of how to sign up will be out very soon!). Please pray that this will be a life changing event for so many. If anybody would like further information about getting involved – I would love to hear from you.

My e-mail address is...rgrovesmith@stmichaelsbtree.co.uk

Wishing you every blessing,

Rachel Grove Smith



Saturday 18 March
St Michaels Church House
6.30 – 9.00 pm
Adults £1 Children (6-18) 50p

Includes drink and cake

**Tickets from Adam Grove-Smith, Lin Terris,
Jo Adams, Jonathan Wicks, Sue Marriott or
Christine Hart; chrisdave7june@yahoo.co.uk**



MISSION OF THE MONTH

CHAIN FOUNDATION

In 2001, the Chain Foundation Uganda orphanage was started by retired Archbishop Livingstone Nkoyoyo in response to the needs of local orphans, former street children, abandoned children, and the disabled. The foundation is home to more than 100 orphans and other vulnerable children, including over 40 blind students. It provides a loving, Christian environment to meet the children's physical, educational, medical, and spiritual needs. The foundation also assists many at-risk or disabled children who live in nearby communities, and provides community education programs. The Chain Foundation is located in Mukono, 20 kilometres from the capital city of Kampala.



The Martin Nkoyoyo Inclusive School at the Chain Foundation opened in February 2009. It is the first school of its kind in Uganda, integrating blind and sighted children. This model school currently serves over 400

students from the orphanage and from nearby villages. The library at the school has an expansive selection of books, including Braille books for the blind students.

Background

Uganda is a country of 27 million people. Nearly 2 million of these are orphans, most of whom lost their parents to AIDS or other diseases. In addition, an estimated 400,000 Ugandan children are blind, usually due to congenital cataracts or preventable illnesses such as measles. Thousands more are hearing-impaired. These disabled children are often seen as a curse on the family. They

are frequently neglected, mistreated, and denied education. Many are abandoned or abused.

The Chain Foundation's dedicated, Christian approach to community solutions is working to change these grim statistics. Their ministry brings hope to hundreds of vulnerable children, educates local communities, and provides support and encouragement for impoverished families.

Our Future

Future expansion will create space for over 100 blind or deaf children at the orphanage, and will increase the school size to allow more local children to access education. Future growth depends entirely on donations and grants.

This article is taken from Chain Foundation website

David Huxter (Jnr) - St Michael's rep for Chain Foundation

GOD KNOWS I LOVE MY COUNTRY

On Wednesday 15th February 2023 Nicola Sturgeon stepped down from being Scotland's First Minister. After the achievement of being Scotland's first woman First Minister and working hard for Scottish nationalism all her adult life, and not least for 8 years as First Minister, she had the courage to stand down. She will be remembered for her Scottish nationalism.

ANOTHER 'NATIONALIST WITH A DIFERENT FLAVOUR

Eric Liddell was a Scots international rugby player. But he was more famous for winning 400 metres gold medal in the Paris Olympics of 1924.

TOUGH GRILLING

He was down to run in the 100 meters, but refused because the heats were on a Sunday. The British Olympic committee tried to persuade him to run on a Sunday and came as near as they could to accusing Liddell of being unpatriotic.

'CHARIOTS OF FIRE'

In this famous film, Liddell is portrayed as standing up to the nobility who made up the committee. Ian Cuthbertson, who played Eric, says 'GOD KNOWS I LOVE MY COUNTRY'.

AND CHINA TOO.

Eric was born in what was then known as Tientsin to missionary parents on 16th January 1902. He went to his parent's homeland to study at Edinburgh University to study. Whilst he was there he stepped out into fame because of his success as a sprinter.

Scotland loved him. He ran in the Olympics and having finished his studies he returned as a missionary to China.

INTERRED BY THE JAPANESE

The Japanese overran great swathes of North West China in the 1930s & 40s. Eric, along with other Brits were interred by the invaders. Just before liberation, he died of a brain tumour on 21st February 1945. He could have been freed but he gave his place to a pregnant woman.

BREADTH OF NATIONALISM

He was a Scot who lived and died in another land he loved.

Here's a question: Can a Christian say with the words put in Eric Liddell's mouth, 'God knows I love my country' and also love other countries as well? God seems to do that. Can I suggest that *Proverbs 8:27 to 31* gives us view of how God feels for planet earth?

*²⁷ When he established the heavens, I was there;
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
²⁸ when he made firm the skies above,
when he established the fountains of the deep,
²⁹ when he assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
³⁰ then I was beside him, like a master workman,
and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,
³¹ rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the children of man.*

Stephen Bailey

FARMING SEASONS

Spring is fast approaching, many farmers across the country will be readying themselves for the busy times ahead regardless of which farming sector they are in, but the question I am looking at in this month's article is how farmers in general are coping with their own mental health and what is being done to help the industry deal with the problems.



DEFRA estimates that 472,000 people work in agriculture across the UK, including farmers, farm workers and their households. Working across an estimated 219,000 holdings, farming people are responsible for

71% of UK land. The health and wellbeing of these people is inextricably linked to the business of farming. They face challenging, isolated conditions characterised by long working hours. Farming people work in a sector with a rate of accidents 20 times higher than the all-industry rate. In addition, farmers and farm workers can often face physical health challenges: musculoskeletal injury, for example is over three times the rate for all industries. More than one farmer a week takes their own life, being less visible are the high rates of mental ill-health.

Mental wellbeing describes our ability to cope with the ups and downs of everyday life. Long periods of low mental health wellbeing can lead to poor mental health, characterised by diagnosable conditions such as anxiety or depression. The farming community has higher than average mental health illness. The factors cited that cause stress in farming communities often include unpredictable weather, loss of

subsidies/future trade deals and regulation, compliance and inspection.

The Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution -RABI- is a national charity providing support to the industry farming. Established in 1860, it was founded on the belief that every member of the farming community matters and should never have to face difficulties alone. RABI recently conducted a survey with over 15,000 responses, which identified low levels of mental wellbeing with over a third of farming people probably or possibly depressed. As a result of this survey, in 2022 RABI introduced new in-person mental health counselling and farming-focused mental health training initiatives to complement existing schemes. This means that free, confidential in-person counselling is delivered by BACP accredited counsellors responding to initial requests within 24 hours through their 24/7 helpline.

Counsellors providing support are selected by a combination of their clinical expertise and their background, engagement or interest in farming and rural communities. In addition to in-person counselling, RABI is launching the first suite of accredited/certified mental health training tailored for the farming sector. This is to help individuals who want to develop the skills to open conversations around mental health with friends, colleagues, customers and clients. The idea being that trainees will be able to start conversations about wellbeing with confidence. Those who receive training also have access to ongoing support, so they should not have to shoulder the weight of difficult conversations alone.

This subject of mental health is of course far greater than our farming communities and the problem resides in all communities including our own community in Braintree. The causes of these problems are often complex but financial, relationship

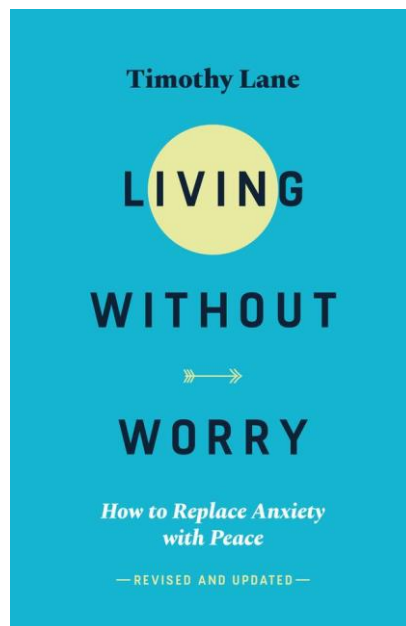
breakdowns, physical health and addiction are some of the factors which can contribute to an individuals anxiety. Often people suffering with mental health are reluctant to seek help, and medical services and GP appointments can be hard to access.

The question which we might ask ourselves is...are we as a church also in a place to support individuals in our community, to share in their problems and offer support in a safe place? The sad truth is that we live in a broken world and you don't have to travel far to find stories of suffering and need.

Adam Grove Smith

LIVING WITHOUT WORRY

How to Replace Anxiety with Peace



Everyone worries and while it may become a familiar companion in our lives, it never becomes a welcome one. Perhaps you are a natural worrier or the pandemic has caused you to worry more or brought out worry that you never thought you had. Or maybe you worry from time to time.

Wouldn't it be great if there were a way to worry less, or not at all, in the midst of your struggles?

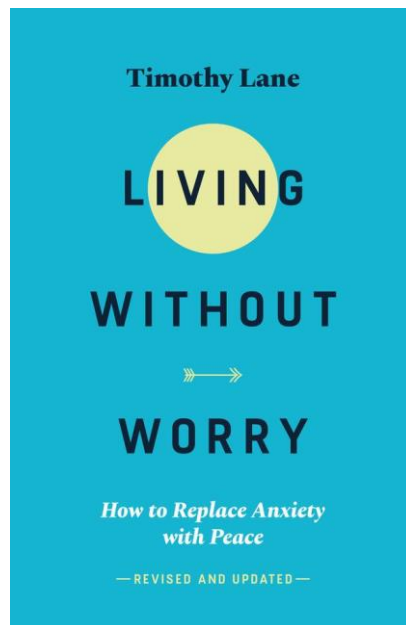
I've read a book called '**Living without worry**' that I found really helpful. It says about the book – 'If you ever worry, you will want to read this book. You will not find trite, easy answers; but you will find real ones as you discover what worry is, why you feel it, and how you can replace it with an experience of real, lasting peace in all the ups and downs of life.'

Whether you worry a little or a lot, would you like to go through the book with the support of others? If so, we will have books available to buy at church for £5.99, so that you can read the first chapter before our first meeting on **Tuesday 28th March from 10-**

11.30am in Church House. We then plan to meet monthly on the 4th Tuesday of the month.

Each chapter has a few helpful questions that we will be discussing together when we meet.

If you have any questions, or would like to get a copy of the book and sign up to join the group, then please speak to Jo Adams, Jennifer Bailey or Rachel Grove Smith.



Jo Adams

AN UNEXPECTED HOLIDAY – D.L. MOODY

“Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? show us your mercy, Lord, and grant us your salvation.” (Psalm 85:6-7)

The revivalist D.L. Moody was on vacation in England from his ministry in Chicago. At one point during his sabbatical there, a local pastor prevailed upon Moody to speak at his parish church. So D.L. went to preach the next Sunday morning. That afternoon he recorded in his journal that it was the dearest crowd he had ever seen, and the only thing worse than preaching to those people was that he had promised to speak again the same night.

But that night, midway through his sermon, something happened. The people started to come to life, and Moody felt compelled to ask if anyone would like to become a Christian. Many people stood up. He was taken aback, "Maybe you don't understand what I am asking. So when we are dismissed if you want to become a Christian come over to this little room and meet with me." When the service was over, D.L. went to the room and it was packed, and many became believers.

Now he was on vacation, and so next day, Moody boarded a train for Ireland ... but the Lord had other plans. Disembarking in Ireland he found a message awaiting him, "Come back. Revival has broken out." So Moody returned to the church and preached for 10 straight nights and over 400 people came to the Lord. Moody was perplexed. How could he have known that an 80-year-old widow named Mary Ann Adeland had read one of his sermons in the newspaper and begun praying every day that God would bring D.L. Moody to her church?

We might well wonder what this thing is about prayer ... especially prayer in the secret place. How does it work? Why does it work?

A little old widow's love and concern for her spiritually dead neighbours inspires her to pray relentlessly and specifically, and the vacation plans of a great revivalist are adjusted for a local harvest, a God-orchestrated vacation revival for D.L. Moody, right in her hometown! Believers pray because they love, and little passionate souls like Mary Ann Adeland are hidden gems in the Lord's crown. How many spiritually dead neighbours do you have? If you see them with spiritual eyes, and you truly love them, consider your sister Mary Ann, her deep concern... and how the Lord channelled one of His trusted servants right into her neighbourhood for a local revival.

Supplied from "The Worthy Brief" by Peter Schaad

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD (OCC) SHOEBOXES

This is a belated article for the Samaritan's Purse OCC Shoebox appeal 2022, but thank you once again for all your donations of filled shoeboxes, fillers for shoeboxes, online shoeboxes and monetary gifts in 2022.

A special thank you also goes to Margaret St. John-Coleman and her craft team for all the hand knitted hats, gloves and scarves which were donated along with the shoeboxes.



St. Michael's church sent 25 completed shoeboxes and 6 online shoeboxes for Christmas 2022. The mission of OCC is to provide God's love in a tangible way to children in need around the world. Samaritan's Purse's goal was to send two thirds of shoeboxes from the UK to

Ukraine or the neighbouring countries like Moldova and Romania, that are hosting many Ukrainian refugee families.

I recently discovered via the follow your shoebox through our online donation (which allows you to print out a barcode to put in your shoebox gift) that our boxes went to Belarus and Albania.

During a year of war in Ukraine, Samaritan's Purse continues to bring relief to Ukrainians whose lives have been torn apart by the conflict. Samaritan's Purse has provided food, water, medical care, shelter materials and more to over 8 million people.

For more information, please go to Samaritans-purse.org.uk Remember you can start collecting for shoeboxes from now for this Christmas, especially if you spot a bargain! Thank you,

Sue Marriott

ECO CHURCH: CHURCH HOUSE GARDEN

You will have read in February's LINK, that St Michael's Church are working towards an award in the A Rocha Eco Church scheme. This month we focus on plans in the Land section of the award. This looks at how we use the land we control, which really means Church House Garden, as Braintree District Council manage the churchyard round the church building.

Our aim is to develop a plan for maintaining the garden, maximising and balancing the use of the space by the church congregation and groups using Church House, and the garden's place as a rich habitat for wildlife.

You may have noticed one or two new features which are already contributing to the biodiversity of the garden:

A log pile and a rubble pile as shelter for insect life.



Using material from the compost heap to enrich the borders.

The bank next to the drive being used for plants to encourage nectar-loving insects, such as this buddleia and borage.



David Birch has supplied and installed some water butts, which will make watering much easier. Rod Davey is mowing the grass monthly through the summer (so not too often, allowing a few flowers to grow among the grass), and Estelle and Jonathan Wicks are doing some gardening most Monday mornings. The church wardens now have a garden maintenance plan so all developments work towards the same aims.

How can I help?

Enjoy: Do feel free to use the garden with your group, or as individuals, for social activities, or prayer and contemplation at any time.

Spot wildlife: Just inside Church House is a list of wildlife which was seen in the garden during Autumn 2022. Please do add to the list if you spot something new.

Give: Several birds already nest in the trees and shrubs. Could you build and donate other animal homes; such as a bird box, a bat box, a swift nest-box or a hedgehog house?

Give: Do you have any surplus plants or seeds you can donate? We ideally need ones known to be useful for insects, bees,

butterflies or birds, including some suitable for shade. Give to Estelle or Jonathan in church or leave in church house garden for Monday morning.

Everything we can do in our church garden not only helps us to appreciate God's rich creation, but plays a small part in helping to nurture and preserve it.

Estelle and Jonathan Wicks

COFFEE CHAT WITH ROGER COOKE



Third Monday coffee and conversation

I shall be in the [Quadrant](#) cafe on **Monday 20th March** at 10.30am so if you'd like to join me you'd be very welcome!

Looking forward to seeing you.

Roger Cooke

BELFRY BULLETIN

Our established pattern of ringing, for services and weekly practice has gone ahead as usual and the practice has reaped benefits as Rosie Gray and Sarah Brazeby are now regular service ringers and working towards Quarter Peals.

Practice night on Monday 20th February was not quite as intense as usual, as it was Lin Ould's birthday and so we had to stop ringing to sing happy birthday to Lin and eat a delicious cake. Happy Birthday Lin and thanks for the cake.

AWAY FROM THE TOWER

Jodie Hill has rung 2 Quarter Peals, 1 was for the Bristol University Guild, the other was her 1st of Treble Bob Major ringing the Treble. Well done Jodie.

Peter Smith has rung 4 Quarters, 2 of Surprise Major with the Golden Oldies one in memory of Peter Childs. 1 at Witham in memory of Peter Childs and the other one at Builth Wells on the day of Peter Childs funeral.

Debbie Hill has 2 Handbell Quarter Peals at home, 1 was her 1st of St. Clements Collage Bob Minor, the other of Plain Bob Minor in memory of Peter Childs. Well done Debbie.

Bradley Hill, WELL, he has been driving Husky dogs pulling a sledge in the Arctic, no bells even on the dogs. He has also been Skiing and Snowboarding and not a cowbell in sight. At the time of writing, he was still in one piece! Here's hopping.

Peter Smith

MARCH DIARY
www.stmichaelsbtree.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 Wednesday

10:00am Meeting Point

2 Thursday

10:00am Coffee@StMichael's (in church)

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

3 Friday

11am-2pm Warm Spaces in Church House

5 Sunday

9.00am Next Plus Breakfast (14-18s)

10:00am Church Family Worship

12:00pm Bring & Share Lunch

4:00pm Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

6:30pm Evening Worship

6 Monday

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm Six Steps to loving your church – session 3 (Church House)

7 Tuesday

1:15pm Tiddlywinks

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

8 Wednesday

10:00am Meeting Point

9 Thursday

12pm-2pm Women@StMichaels Prayer Lunch

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

10 Friday

11am-2pm Warm Spaces in Church House

12 Sunday

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

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

10:00am Morning Worship (Mission Sunday – Chain Foundation)

6:30pm Holy Communion

13 Monday

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm Six Steps to loving your church – session 4 (Church House)

14 Tuesday

7.30pm Braintree Youth Project Charity AGM (@Braintree Baptist Church)

8.00pm First Priority Prayer Meeting on Zoom

17 Friday

11am-2pm Warm Spaces in Church House

18 Saturday

6:30-9:00pm Beetle Drive in Church House

19 Sunday

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

10:00am Family Service (Mothering Sunday)

6:30pm All-Age Tonight

20 Monday

10:30am Coffee Chat with Roger Cooke @Quadrant

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm Six Steps to loving your church – session 5 (Church House)

21 Tuesday

1:15pm Tiddlywinks

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

22 Wednesday

10.00am Meeting Point

23 Thursday

2:00pm Oasis@StMichaels: informal bereavement support group (Small Hall)

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

24 Friday

11am-2pm Warm Spaces in Church House

26 Sunday

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

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

10:00am Morning Worship

6:30pm Holy Communion

27 Monday

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm Six Steps to loving your church – session 6 (Church House)

28 Tuesday (LINK SUBMISSION DUE)

1:15pm Tiddlywinks

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

29 Wednesday

10.00am Meeting Point

30 Thursday

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

31 Friday

11am-2pm Warm Spaces in Church House