

The LINK

NOVEMBER 2023



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

A TIME TO REMEMBER – A TIME TO PRAY

Dear Friends,

November is a time when we turn our minds to **Remembrance Sunday**. We remember, with both sadness and gratitude, all who suffered so greatly, and sacrificed so much in times of war. We also give thanks to God, for his deliverance of our nation, and many others, by his providential hand, seen on many occasions during the World Wars of last century.

Remembrance Sunday is on 12th November and we look forward to welcoming **Colonel Edward Armitstead**, who will be representing the Soldiers and Airmen's Scripture Reader's Association (SASRA). He will be speaking at both our **10am service** and also the **3pm Civic Service**. I hope you will be able to join us for one or both of those services.

We will not just be thinking and praying for wars in the past, but also the very real suffering and danger of today's wars, particularly those in **Ukraine** and **Israel & Gaza**. Tearfund helpfully gave the following guide, for what we can be praying for:

- Pray for peace
- Pray for safety
- Pray for strength
- Pray for hope
- Pray for healing

A Tearfund prayer for Gaza & Israel:

Dear God,

We cry out to you on behalf of the people seriously affected by the conflict in Gaza and Israel. Our hearts

break at the devastation and suffering that we see, and we know it breaks yours, too.

We ask that you would stretch out your mighty hand to bring an end to this war.

We cry out for people who have been injured or traumatised, who have lost loved ones or their homes. Please provide everything they need and be their comfort, their hope, their healer, and their safe refuge.

We pray for your peace to reign. We look to you as our Saviour and the hope of the world.

Amen.

In Matthew 19:26, Jesus says, "***With God, all things are possible.***" Whilst it stretches our faith, let us pray that a lasting and fair peace can be found in both Ukraine and Israel & Gaza.

Wishing you every blessing,

Nigel



MISSION OF THE MONTH BARNABAS AID

Barnabas Aid (formerly Barnabas Fund) is an international aid agency that aims to support Christian communities, churches and individuals around the world who face persecution and discrimination because of their faith.

They started a new outreach to fight hunger: **You share. We ship.**

We are asked to commit to putting together a monthly food box of dry food items (we will tell you which items we currently need). You could do this as an individual, a family, a Sunday School class, a Bible Study group or any other group.

Don't worry if you cannot fill a box to the top each month. Just give what you can. They will send a *food.gives* Starter Pack containing everything you need to get started.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.food.gives/gb/>

"You see that people are justified by what they do and not by faith alone." (James 2:24)

I have been supporting Barnabas for a number of years.

Peter Schaad - St Michael's rep for Barnabas Aid

ONLY BY GOD'S PATIENCE*

THANK GOD FOR MR. RAY

Sunday by Sunday Mr Ray taught us about the Apostle Paul's travels as recorded in the Acts of the Apostle.

'PLYMOUTH BRETHREN'

We gathered at 3.00pm on a Sunday afternoon in a building belonging to what was popularly known as the 'Plymouth Brethren'. Mr Ray told us what the Apostle Paul taught, making it very plain that we nine year old boys needed to come to Jesus Christ who died for our forgiveness and rose again because he was our Lord.

GOING HOME & GIVING UP

Returning home for tea, I went to my bedroom and asked Jesus Christ to receive me. Then after a few weeks, I left Sunday School!

FAST FORWARD A COUPLE OF YEARS

My mother cleaned for a retired vicar and his daughter. One day she knocked at our front door. 'Would I like to go to a Bible class for boys at her church?' Next Sunday I turned up at Mr. Furlong's Bible class. I loved it. They knew how to present the message of Jesus Christ to boys my age.

'WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN THE CHOIR?'

Yes. So, Sunday by Sunday, I listened to the Vicar, Peter Baker. The impressive thing about him was that his life matched what he said in the pulpit. I heard his sermons with great interest. Plain

sailing from then on? No. True to form I gave up the Bible class and the choir.

A FRIEND AND THE 6.30pm SERVICE

Somehow or other (I can't remember the reason why we did it) a friend and I started to go back to the evening service in Christ Church, Barnet. This gave me the opportunity to take stock of my life. Was I going to live for Jesus Christ at school and home? What did that profession of faith all those years before mean? My life did not match up with what I was supposed to believe.

DECISION TIME

Like youngsters today, school kept putting choices before us. Then it was what O' level subjects were we going to do? What did we want to do on leaving school? It was a natural point to make decisions. Amongst those decisions, I felt I had to start to live up to the commitment I made at nine years of age.

FAST FORWARD AGAIN

Mr Ray, Peter Baker – now I came across another man. His name was Thomas Watson. He got me out of a painful experience. The sad experience was depression. At 19 years old, I had everything going for me. Yet a great cloud of sadness enveloped me. One of the effects was to make me ask myself, '*Did God really love me?*' (Yes, a sad, self-centred and introverted question I must admit).

STRANGE TITLE FOR A BOOK! 'A BODY OF DIVINITY'

Thomas Watson lived in the 1640's. His book, '*A Body of Divinity*', was about God, especially the great mercy, love, and kindness of God. Under God it proved to be a milestone on the journey of knowing Jesus Christ better.

NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN

Returning home for the Easter holidays, I went with my parents to Holy Communion. At that service, Jesus Christ became very vivid and real to me. As I heard the words, '*This is my body given for you*', I had the sense that he went to his crucifixion because he loved me so. The depression didn't end then. The experience of that church service is still in my memory. It set me on a road with my Bible whereby I joined the KGB! – 'Know God Better'.

Stephen Bailey

*Summary of talk given at Men's Breakfast on Saturday 23rd September 2023 by request.

A DAY WITH KATIE @CYO

As I start my second year with Christian Youth Outreach (CYO), I thought now would be good to give a more detailed update rather than a quick chat over coffee at the end of a service.

Things are going really well. I've very quickly got to grips with what schools want and how I can deliver that to the children in a fun and exciting way.

I'm writing at lunch time on Monday 9th October and today I have visited 3 schools.

Firstly, I presented an assembly on the story of Mary and Martha to Key Stage 1 (KS1) children, reminding them that we need to take time out of our busy daily lives to stop and talk or listen to Jesus.

From there, I was straight on to meet Sheena to help some Year 4 children answer the big question...'*Where do religious beliefs come from?*' We look at the Big Story of how the printed Bible came to be the wonderful library of history, songs, prayers and stories that we have access to today.

Then, it was time to deliver a lunch club session to some Year 3 children, where we looked at the story of how Jesus is so powerful he was able to raise Jairus' daughter from the dead.

No two days are ever the same as I get to visit so many local schools, and show them the love that Jesus has for all of them. Comments and questions also vary from each session, like today being asked if Jesus could bring back to life their dead pets.

At the end of each session, it's great to see the children leave with a smile on their faces as they think about what they've just learnt and hopefully, I've left each of them with the idea that Jesus is for

all and how amazing their lives could be if they choose to trust and believe in Him.

My work, and the work of the others on the CYO team is only able to happen with the help of *you*. Prayers are always appreciated and we all understand that times are tight for everyone, but please consider your giving to CYO. A one-off gift, a monthly donation, signing up to support us through easyfundraising.org.uk every time you shop online will allow us to continue to support the children of Braintree.

Please get in touch if you would like any more information.

Katie Whitlock





30 people came in five teams to play The Big Weekend Quiz on the evening of Saturday 7th October at Church House. My format combines traditional pen-and-paper in a pub quiz with big screen graphics on which everyone can see the questions, music and video clips, and the all-important

score board. The four rounds of the quiz each consisted of ten questions (each worth one to ten points) and a timed bonus question, all across a wide range of subjects.

There was a very enjoyable fish-&-chips supper at half-time and at the end of Round 2, Dave Marriott's team "The Purple One" had amassed 115 points out of a possible 145, 16 points ahead of their nearest rivals, the youthful but buoyant "Crucifixion Crew" who scored full marks in the bonus question on English national football.

At the end of Round 3, a short pause for ice cream and lollies, and the Purple lead had reduced to just four points, thanks in no small part to "The Cherry Pickers" scoring full marks in the bonus question on dinosaurs, in turn nudging The Crucifixion Crew into third place.



QUIZ HOST (JEFF) WITH THE RUNNERS-UP “THE CHERRY PICKERS” (RACHEL & CO, LEFT) AND WINNERS “THE PURPLE ONE” (DAVE & CO, RIGHT).

Going into the Who Wants To Be A Millionaire finale in Round 4, The Cherry Pickers led by six points, but The Purple One dug deep and produced a series of right answers on film, yoga, German music and champagne bottles to win by nine points with a total 223 out of a possible 300. Congratulations to everyone for an enjoyable, close run contest and thank you for having me as your host of this quiz. I would also like to thank Jo, Jonathan, Lin, Sue and friends for co-ordinating the sign-ups in advance and then organising our meals and refreshments on the night.

R1	R2	R3	R4	R1	BG1	R2	BG2	R3	BG3	R4	BG4	TOTAL	
					[/15]		[/20]		[/20]		[/25]		
1	1	1	1	The Purple One	44	8	55	8	33	12	43	20	223
3	3	2	2	The Cherry Pickers	38	4	42	12	41	20	52	5	214
2	2	3	3	The Crucifixion Crew	34	10	35	20	34	16	39	5	193
5	5	5	4	The Uninformed	28	0	27	12	21	16	48	10	162
4	4	4	5	The Fizzy Quizzers	31	0	32	12	23	16	30	5	149

Jeff Clayton

CHURCH WILDLIFE EXHIBITION AT THE LIBRARY

St Michael's Eco-Church group will be staging a display called *Making Your Garden Wildlife Friendly* at Braintree Library Dome Gallery from Thursday 2nd to Tuesday 7th November.

The exhibition suggests simple steps people can take to promote wildlife in their garden or green space. The first 100 visitors can collect a free packet of wildflower seed, and factsheets with practical tips.

St Michael's are working towards an Eco-Church award, run by Christian environmental organisation, A Rocha. Promoting care for God's creation and encouraging biodiversity is part of that award, so we have started to develop Church House garden, aiming to make it a haven for wildlife in the town centre. Through planting and developing the garden with wildlife in mind, we have already seen an increase in bees, butterflies, and the range of insects and birds. All the photos in the display were taken in our church garden.

Can we encourage you to support the exhibition, pick up a packet of wildflower seed, and think if there is something you can do in your garden to encourage a wider diversity of wildlife. For instance, if you have little space for a wildflower meadow, seed sown thinly in a pot or tub would also work well.

The library is open from 9am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday and to 5.00pm on Saturday, and would be very pleased to have a stream of visitors throughout the week.

Making your Garden **Wildlife Friendly**

An exhibition



Thursday 2nd to Tuesday 7th November

Braintree Library, Dome Gallery

Collect free wildflower seed

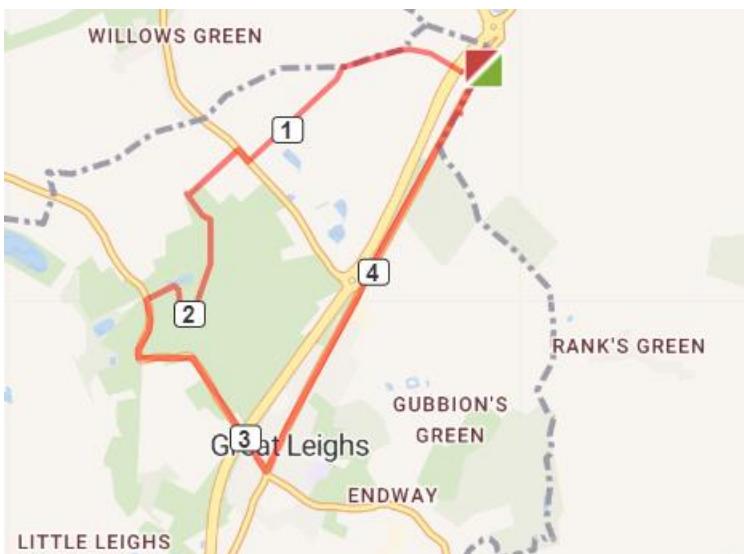
Pick up a wildlife gardening factsheet

Borrow a book



Estelle and Jonathan Wicks, on behalf of the Eco-church group

WALK IN THE COUNTRYSIDE



Join us on Saturday, 25th November for our walk in the countryside - a walk to Phyllis Currie Nature Reserve in Great Leighs. David Birch will be our guide. Everyone is welcome to join in - just turn up! *Please meet at the Green Dragon at 10.00am to set-off at 10.10am.*

The walk will be around 5 miles. There may be an opportunity for refreshments at the Green Dragon. Speak to David Birch or Ade Odupitan for more information. Lifts can be arranged if required.

COFFEE CHAT WITH ROGER COOKE



Third Monday coffee and conversation

I shall be in the Quadrant cafe on Monday 20th November at 10.30am so if you'd like to join me you'd be very welcome!

Looking forward to seeing you.

Roger Cooke

LET DOWN YOUR NETS

“Then Jesus entered into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, *“Launch out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch”*. But Simon answered and said to Him, *“Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, nevertheless at Your word I will let down the nets”*. When they had done this, they caught such a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break; so they signalled to their partners in the other boat that they should come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, *“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”*. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, because of the catch of the fish which they had taken. And so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, *“Fear not, from now on you will catch men”*. So when they brought their ships to land, they forsook all and followed Him.” (Luke 5:3-11)

Sukkot is a Jewish festival about rejoicing in the blessings that God has provided, but let's be sure our focus is on the Lord of blessing – instead of the blessings!

We read in Luke that Jesus told His disciples to go into the deep waters and let down their nets for fish. When they did, their nets were filled up with fish to the point of breaking. Being fishermen and businessmen, they may have been tempted to start doing business. I mean, think how much they could make!

But God had a different purpose. The disciples' occupation as fishermen was just a vehicle for God to demonstrate His great power and love. He wasn't blessing them with fish so that they

would get excited about fishing - He was blessing them with fish so that they could get their eyes off their fishing and on to the greater call He had for them! Thankfully, they left the fishing business and went off with the Lord to do great and mighty things.

Let's make sure we're not getting up wrapped up in fish! We seek the Lord for His blessings, prosperity, and success. But true discipleship is focusing not on the blessings of the Lord, but on the Lord of the blessings!

We can rejoice in our blessings, but let's not dwell on them! Let's set our eyes on the Lord and the calling He has for us. When He sees that we have pure and willing hearts, He will be faithful to use us to accomplish His glorious plan!

Supplied from "The Worthy Brief" by Peter Schaad

THANK-YOU – FROM WOMEN@ST MICHAELS & SAMARITAN'S PURSE

A very big “*Thank you*” to all who were involved with the Coffee Morning and Sale of Pre-loved Clothes on Saturday 14th October.

Thank you to all who donated – such an abundance of appetising cakes and lots of clothes, in fact, bags and bags of clothes. Thank you to Cynthia and Jean, who had the Coffee Morning running like clockwork; to Sue, Dave and Charlie Marriott, who prepared posters and set up and manned a great Samaritan's Purse, Operation Christmas Child, display complete with a continuous video loop; thank you to all who set up “stalls” and sold clothes on the day. And a special thank you must go to all who worked behind the scenes beforehand, sorting and pricing the many beautiful donated items and carrying bags up and down stairs in Church House. The term, “working like Trojans” springs to mind.

Thank you to all who came: to those who drank coffee and ate cakes; to those who bought clothes; to those who made donations.

And after all that hard work, a splendid result! After adding the donations for leftover cakes on Sunday morning, the total raised for Operation Christmas Child was just over £360. Very, very many thanks.

Margaret St John-Coleman

BELFRY BULLETIN

With the holiday season seemingly over, we are back to a normal service, and practice-ringing pattern of...before 10am services with the occasional Quarter Peal prior to the 6.30pm service and Monday evening practices.

Two groups of visiting ringers came to sample our bells recently, a group of 16 from Hursley in Hampshire were the visitors on Saturday 7th October 2023 and 10 members of the West Anglian Guild visited on Wednesday 18th October.

THREE QUARTER PEALS RUNG

Before the 6.30pm service on 1st October a band drawn from the Essex Association rang 1296 changes of Plain Bob Caters in 45mins. Steve Nash 1, Debbie Hill 2, Gill Sparling 3, Theo Johnson 4, David Sparling 5, Adam Sloman 6, Colin Chapman 7, Lucas Owen 8, Andrew Kelso 9, Vicki Chapman 10.

On Monday evening 9th October we rang Stedman Doubles, 1260 changes in 36mins. Jodie Hill 1, Simon Ward 2, Debbie Hill 3, Peter Smith 4, Bradley Hill [c] 5. This was Jodie's 1st QP of Stedman Doubles, congratulations.

The 3rd Quarter was 1288 changes of St. Simons Bob Triples in 46mins on Sunday 22nd October prior to the 10am service. Lin Ould 1, Jodie Hill 2, Debbie Hill 3, Ellis Whitehouse 4, Jim Green 5, Peter Smith 6, Bradley Hill [c] 7, Like Attfield 8, this was Jodie's 1st blows in the method and Luke's 1st QP on 8 bells congratulation both.

AWAY FROM THE TOWER

On Thursday 21st September, Peter Smith joined the Great Barford band to ring a Quarter Peal of St. Clements College Bob minor. On Saturday 23rd, a District band rang a QP of Lincolnshire Surprise Major at Halstead.

Having said that holiday season was over, Bradley Hill has been away for a week's sailing again. He will soon have webbed feet!

Peter rang a Peal of 3 minor methods, Cambridge surprise, St. Clements and Plain Bob at Stisted on Saturday 15th October.

Debbie and Bradley Hill meet weekly for Hand bell method ringing. On 24th October with Jim Green and Simon Ward rang a Quarter Peal of Plain Bob Major.

Peter Smith

NOVEMBER 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

2 Thursday

9am-5:30pm Church Wildlife Exhibition at Braintree Library
10-12noon Coffee@StMichael's in church

3 Friday

9am-5:30pm Church Wildlife Exhibition at Braintree Library

4 Saturday

9am-5:00pm Church Wildlife Exhibition at Braintree Library

5 Sunday

10:00am Church Family Worship – Fishermen's Mission
4:00pm Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
6:30pm Evening Worship

6 Monday

9am-5:30pm Church Wildlife Exhibition at Braintree Library
7:30pm Bell Ringing
7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)
8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

7 Tuesday

9am-5:30pm Church Wildlife Exhibition at Braintree Library

8 Wednesday

10:00am Meeting Point

9 Thursday

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

12 Sunday (*Last day to drop off your OCC Shoeboxes in church*)

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

10:00am Morning Worship – Remembrance Sunday

3:00pm Civic Service – Remembrance Sunday

6:30pm Holy Communion

13 Monday

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)

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

14 Tuesday

1:15 – 2:45pm Tiddlywinks

8.00-9.00pm First Priority Prayer Meeting

15 Wednesday

10:00am Meeting Point

16 Thursday

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

18 Saturday

9am- 12:30pm Men's @St Michaels (Church House) – A Morning Conference – Firm Foundations – building on the rock

19 Sunday

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

10:00am Holy Communion

6:30pm All-Age Tonight

20 Monday

- 10:30am Coffee Chat with Roger Cooke @Quandrant
- 7:30pm Bell Ringing
- 7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)
- 8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

21 Tuesday

- 1:15 - 2:45pm Tiddlywinks

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

26 Sunday

- 10:00am Junior Church (3-14s)
- 10:00am Morning Worship
- 6:30pm Holy Communion

27 Monday (LINK SUBMISSION DUE)

- 7:30pm Bell Ringing
- 7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)
- 8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

28 Tuesday

- 1:15 - 2:45pm Tiddlywinks

29 Wednesday

- 10:00am Meeting Point

30 Thursday

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

