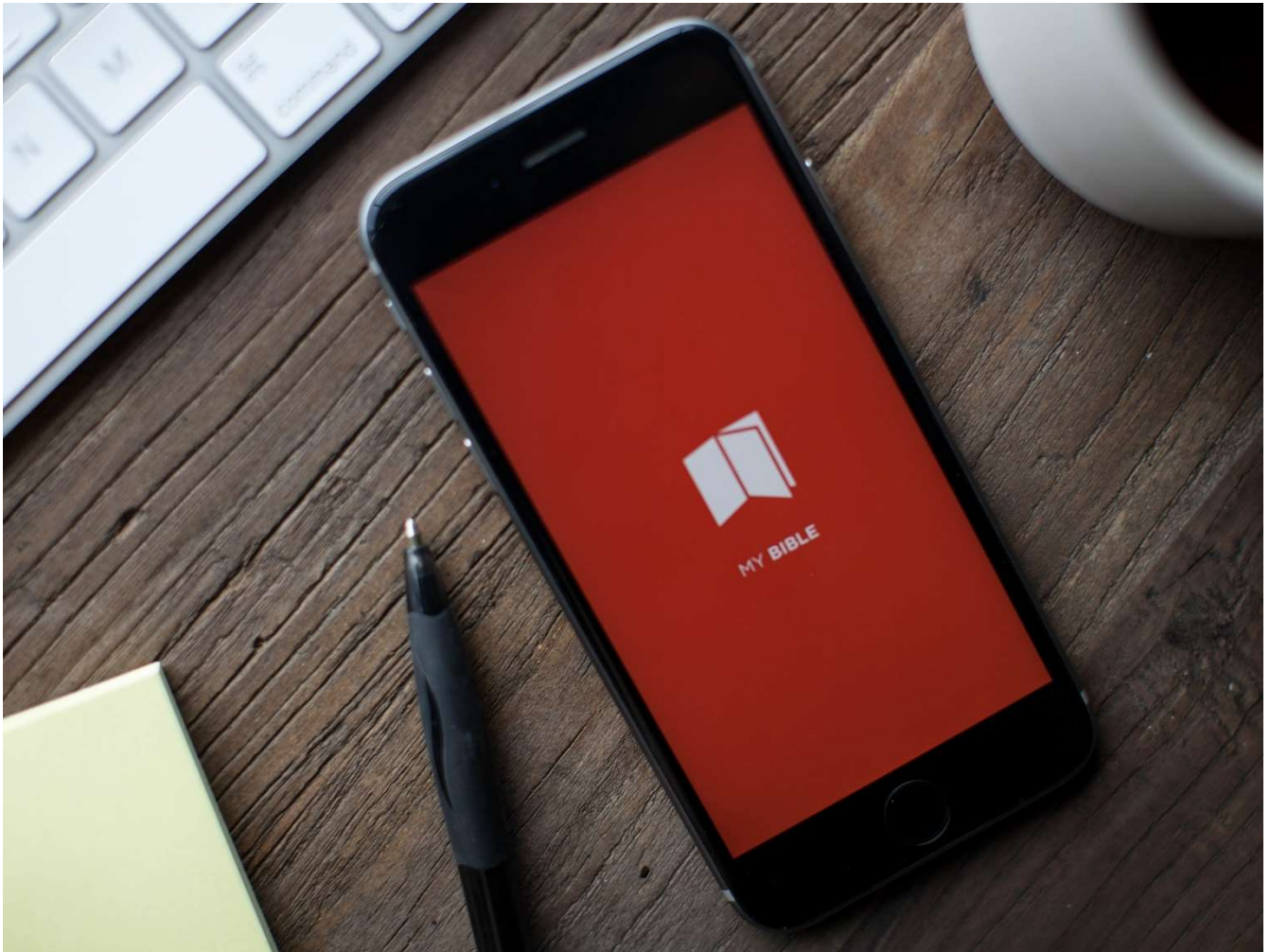


The LINK digital edition

August 2020



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



Summer plans

Dear Friends,

During August, we will be combining the Children's & Families service & adult service into a single online Family Service.

We are very much looking forward to the SMASH Club service on Sun 2nd Aug, following a great week, with our first ever online SMASH Club (children's holiday club).

The following four weeks will each be focusing on one of the parables of Jesus – simple stories of everyday events, which Jesus told in order to convey profound spiritual truths. Jesus' parables were often about farming or weddings and other celebrations. Our four parables will be:

- **Sun 9th Aug:** Lowest seat at the feast (Luke 14:7-14) – **“Be humble”**
- **Sun 16th Aug:** Workers in the vineyard, early & late (Matthew 20:1-16) – **“More than they deserved”**
- **Sun 23rd Aug:** Invitation to a wedding banquet (Matthew 22:2-14) – **“Unexpected guests”**
- **Sun 30th Aug:** Wise & foolish bridesmaids (Matthew 25:1-13) – **“Keep watch”**

We hope you will be able to join us for these services, launched on Sundays at 10am, then available all week on catch-up, both online and through St Michael's by Phone.

I don't know if you will be staying put this summer or getting away for a break, but I hope you will be able to enjoy some rest and refreshment.

Rest is something God modelled for us after his act of creation (Genesis 2:2). Jesus offers us "rest for our souls", if we take his yoke and learn from him (Matthew 11:29). Whatever gives you rest, may I encourage you to seek some of it this summer.

Wishing you every blessing,

Nigel

MISSION OF THE MONTH

ACTS MINISTRY - BURKINA FASO (West Africa)

ACTS in Burkina Faso works among the most vulnerable people in one of the poorest countries in the world. On the scale of poorest countries Burkina Faso is 173 out of 175. I visited Burkina Faso in 2007 and met with Joanna Ilboudo who set up ACTS, having 'love and hope for mother and child'. Widows and orphans are the forgotten ones. They have no voice and no means of support. They are considered outcasts due to the fear of AIDS. Widows have no opportunity for education and no hope of gaining skills necessary to support a family. Without financial means, widows and orphans are caught in a cycle of poverty, sickness, and ignorance.

ACTS work like this: -

1. Ellel Medical Centre which provides maternal care and child health and has a dispensary, a laboratory, and a medical imaging unit. Patient visits have been increasing year on year.
2. Education: It has hundreds of orphans and rural poor children in formal education; many children in vocational training; widows in micro-enterprise and literacy training.
3. Nutrition: ACTS feeds 850 orphans each day. For some children it is the only meal they have, and this makes a big difference to their lives.
4. Temple Evangelique El Rosi: Organises evangelical campaigns, trains new disciples, trains pastors, has brought 1000 people to salvation.
5. Editing and Publishing Department: trains Christian writers and promotes and publishes Christian literature.
6. Community Development which brings spiritual, economic, social, and physical relief.

Since 2015, Burkina Faso has faced an unprecedented situation with terrorists' attacks giving rise to a growing number of displaced people. This year, with Covid-19, Burkina is fighting two wars and the government is overwhelmed by both situations. In addition to their ongoing ministry, ACTS is seeking to do all it can to help meet the challenges and needs of the vulnerable.

Only God's love can make lasting change in the lives of men, women, boys, and girls caught in the oppression of poverty and ignorance.

Take a look at the ACTS website (www.actsburkina.org) for more information and images of their ministry in action.

Terry Clark

JOHN BUNYAN VISITS 'WHITE HORSE TAVERN'.

Or rather White Horse Tavern visits John Bunyan!

Braintree has a lot to do with this 17th century pot and kettle repairer. He gives his name to one of our schools and a street. There is a house in Rayne Road with a plaster notice saying that he stayed there.

At least two of our churches look back to him with thanksgiving. In the last four hundred years, myriads of Christians of many denominations have been helped by him.

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

This is the title of a famous Christian classic. Bunyan casts his story as a dream and it bears the images of a man, like Bunyan, who trudge the roads seeking employment as a 'tinker'- one who repaired pots and pans.

IN PRISON

He was imprisoned twice because he preached in barns and cottages. In the reign of Charles 2nd such meetings were illegal.

But there they were effective. Ordinary country people from Bedfordshire to Essex were converted to a living faith in Jesus Christ.

HELP ON THE JOURNEY.

To help these new Christians, he describes the journey a Christian makes from the 'City of Destruction' to the 'Celestial City'. He describes in vivid images the dangers and the blessings the Christian finds on the way. His pictures and descriptions of the people and places Pilgrim meets on the way have made the book a good read.

MEMBERS OF WHT

Each of us in WHT are going to describe a place that Pilgrim visits – e.g. Doubting Castle, Vanity Fair, the Slough of Despond and so on, hunting out the references in the story to places in the Bible

ONCE A YEAR

One of the 20th century great Bible teachers and theologians, Dr Jim Packer, who died this month aged 93, used to read 'Pilgrim's Progress' once every year. No wonder there was a warmth about Packer's writings.

Another local man, John Owen the brilliant and able sometime vicar of Coggeshall, wished he could preach like the unschooled Bunyan.

Another local hero, Charles Spurgeon, reckoned that if you pricked Bunyan, his blood would flow out 'bibline' (sic)!

AUGUST

WHT intend to read 'Pilgrim's Progress' in August. Then in September share our findings online or by post. If you would like to join in, please let me know with your email address.

Stephen Bailey

FOCUS?

Matthew 16:24-25: Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

We live in a day and age that everywhere we turn there’s a “self-help” theory. Book, videos and DVDs, websites world renown speakers, you name it – all dedicated to helping us “feel good about ourselves”. Yet somehow, still many of us struggle with self-consciousness, even as Christians!

But here’s something to consider. Did Jesus ever say, “feel good about yourself”? No. On the contrary, He said crucify yourself!

If we go around hating ourselves and even feeling condemnation over our faults and sins, what we are really doing is focusing on our self! My wife said a wise thing recently: self-consciousness is not God-consciousness! That about sums it up, I think. God doesn’t want us focused on ourselves – He wants us to be focused on Him!

Supplied by Peter Schaad

AUGUST DIARY

www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk

(Subject to change. Times of services is the broadcast time; they are available for later watching.)

2 Sunday

10:00am Worship on the Web – SMASH Club Service

<http://stmichaelsbtree.co.uk/website/index.php/worship/adult-service>

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

6 Thursday

11:00am Coffee@Home “Zoom Coffee morning”

9 Sunday

Be humble

Luke 14:7-11

10:00am Worship on the Web – Family Service

<http://stmichaelsbtree.co.uk/website/index.php/worship/adult-service>

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

11 Tuesday

8-9pm First Priority Prayer Meeting on Zoom

13 Thursday

11:00am Coffee@Home “Zoom Coffee morning”

16 Sunday

More than they deserved

Matthew 20:1-16

10:00am Worship on the Web – Family Service

<http://stmichaelsbtree.co.uk/website/index.php/worship/adult-service>

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

18 Tuesday SEPTEMBER LINK SUBMISSION DUE

20 Thursday

11:00am Coffee@Home “Zoom Coffee morning”

23 Sunday

Unexpected guests

Matthew 22:2-14

10:00am Worship on the Web – Family Service

<http://stmichaelsbtree.co.uk/website/index.php/worship/adult-service>

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

27 Thursday

11:00am Coffee@Home “Zoom Coffee morning”

30 Sunday

Keep watch

Matthew 25:1-13

10:00am Worship on the Web – Family Service

<http://stmichaelsbtree.co.uk/website/index.php/worship/adult-service>

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

DIARY OF A CHURCHWARDEN

This is not a diary entry as such, however I thought I would share some of the things going on in the buildings and in my role of Church Warden over the last couple of months.

Whilst the buildings are closed, they still exist and still need care, attention, and preparation. In the Church we have cleared the main areas, as we target the guidelines for when we re-open to the public.

Books, kneelers, handouts, flags, and displays have all been moved into a closed quarantine area (Formerly the Creche). Signage is everywhere, as is hand sanitizer and markings for sitting in bubbles.



To get this far though was a challenge, who is prepared and able to help in the process? Staying socially distant and able to work autonomously knowing the ideas that are needed. I give thanks that I have one of my sons with time, strength, and drive to do.

Going forward the idea of bubbles working together is important and scheduling works. I have several volunteer bubbles of 2/3 people that are scheduled to help to do tasks autonomously across the buildings. However, if you can **safely** volunteer please let me or Lin know.

The closure of the buildings allows the following pieces of work to be carried out:

- Re-organisation of Church and Church House to meet C. of E. and Government guidelines. (Including the paperwork and



process planning and a lot of lamination.)

- Keeping the Church House garden from getting overgrown. Over 6 one-ton bags of cuttings have been filled so far!
- Updating the stage: clearing, painting, and varnishing.
- Taking old card and bits to the recycling centre!
- Monitoring meters and looking for any signs of damp/animals. (Yes, we had a bird stuck in church house).
- Keeping water run regularly for all taps/toilets.
- Varnishing the Jesus Chapel floor.
- Replacing some fabric in the Church.
- Finishing the Church's lights and electrics. (The spotlights pointing at the front of the step and sockets round the music group).



If anyone does need to go into either building, please inform me, Lin, or Nigel so that we can make sure we are all working together in a safe environment. I have guidance notes and you must follow some procedures that you might not be used to. (Also, it is an opportunity to avoid others taking additional trips into the buildings!)



It is a different feeling in the Church building, maybe one to make you think, how important to you, are the artefacts in there and presenteeism compared to the Word of the Lord?

“The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man,” - Acts 17:24

Dave Marriott

BELFRY BULLETIN

BELL RESTORATION UPDATE

There is very little to report this month as no news on the progress from White's as to the return of the bells has been forthcoming.

We have received delivery of the cushions for seating in the ringing chamber and Bradley reports that they are of very good quality.

We have held another meeting to chat and do some ringing via Zoom and ringing room which always proves entertaining. We are planning a socially distanced meeting in one of our gardens by way of a change to take place in the near future.

With the lockdown easing and churches opening for services and prayer ringing is beginning to start in towers where appropriate and with bands that comply with the regulations. I had the joy to hear bells ringing whilst away in the Peak District in Mid-July.

STAY SAFE

Peter Smith