

December 2023/January 2024

The Benefice Magazine for the Parishes of St Peter & St Paul, St Peter and St Luke



*St Peter and St Paul's,
Wem*



*St Peter's,
Lee Brockhurst*



*St Luke's,
Weston-under-Redcastle*

**THE BENEFICE OF
ST PETER & ST PAUL, WEM
ST PETER, LEE BROCKHURST
ST LUKE, WESTON-UNDER-REDCASTLE**

Rector

The Reverend John Christopher Jukes BTh (hons) MA
The Rectory Ellesmere Road, Wem SY4 5TU
01939 235343
revjohnjukes@gmail.com

Retired Clergy

Canon Dr William Price
Prebendary Rob Haarhoff
The Reverend Edith Quirey

Further details are available on our website: www.wemcofe.co.uk
and on Facebook @Wemparishchurch

**ST PETER AND ST PAUL'S CHURCH, WEM
Churchwardens**

Sybil Farmer 01939 232568
David Murray 01939 236134

PCC Lay Chair

Sybil Farmer 01939 232568

PCC Treasurer

Caroline Sinclair 01939 232626

Organist

Glyn Williams 01939 234954

Sacristans

June Powell 01939 234412 & Kath Ridgway 01939 290162

Church Flowers
Sybil Farmer 01939 232568

Church Hall Bookings – Via website/Facebook

Baby and Toddler Group (Sweet Peas)
Alison Hope – E-Mail to alisonhope18@yahoo.co.uk

ST PETER'S, LEE BROCKHURST

Churchwardens

Val Lusby 01939 235610
Roger Ashton 01939 232425

Treasurer

Roger Ashton 01939 232425

PCC Secretary

Phoebe Ashton 07858 123669

PCC Lay Chairman

Tim Wilton-Morgan 07802 735769

Church Warden Emeritus

Robert Marsh 01939 200641

ST LUKE'S, WESTON-UNDER-REDCASTLE

Churchwardens

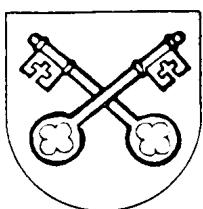
Frank Hosie-Kingham 01939 200618
Helen O'Neill 01939 200663

Treasurer

Colin Holloway 01939 200682

Church Warden Emeritus

Arthur Fox 01630 685180



<u>SERVICES IN THE BENEFICE IN DECEMBER</u>					
DAY	DATE	SEASON	WEM	WESTON	LEE
Sunday	3 rd	Advent Sunday	08:00 HE 09:45 He	09:30 HE	11:15 HE
Thursday	7 th		09:30 HE		
Sunday	10 th	Advent 2	08:00 HE 09:45 HE	09:30 HE	11:15 HE
Thursday	14 th		09:30 HE		
Sunday	17 th	Advent 3	08:00 HE 09:45 HE	09:30 HE	18:30 Carol Service
Thursday	21 st		09:30 HE		
Friday	22 nd	9 lessons & Carols	19:30		
Sunday	24 th	Advent 4	08:00 HE 09:45 HE 15:00	17:00 Carol Service	11:15 MP
Sunday	24 th	Christmas Eve	1500 CS 23:30 MNM		
Monday	25 th	Christmas Day	09:45 HE	10:00 HE	10:30 MP
Thursday	28 th	<i>Holy Innocents</i>	09:30 H/E		
Sunday	31 st	Christmas 2 BENEFICE SERVICE	09:45 HE	<i>at Wem</i>	<i>at Wem</i>

HE—Holy Eucharist MP—Morning Prayer
 CS—Crib Service MNM—Midnight Mass

**Benefice Services for January will be sent separately on line
as soon as they are available.**

Notes from the Editor

Firstly, we wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful and Healthy New Year! Here is the second magazine for 2023. Our next magazine will come out at the end January 2024 and items for inclusion should be sent to Phoebe by Sunday 14th January. We hope this will be in paper as well as electronic form.

This issue contains several posters advertising Christmas events such as the Festival of Christmas Trees in St Peter and St Paul's Church Wem between 1st and 15th December. A Quiz at Weston Village Hall on 1st December and a Christmas Fayre, also in Weston Village Hall on 3rd December.

Three Carol Services are taking place next month the earliest at St Peter's Lee Brockhurst on Sunday 17th December at 6.30 pm followed by mulled wine and mince pies. Then, The Service of Nine Lessons and Carols at St Peter and St Paul's Wem on 22nd December at 7.30 pm and finally at 5.00 pm on Sunday 24th December, Christmas Eve Carols by Candlelight at Weston under Redcastle.

Amid all the commercial advertising for food, presents and expensive activities it is good to step back and sing carols about Jesus' coming into the world to save the human race.

Best wishes

The Editorial Team, Phoebe, Karl and Rob.

Phoebe's contact details

phoebe42.lee@gmail.com or 07858123669 for any queries.

Rector's Ramblings

The Church's New year starts on Advent Sunday. This year that is on Sunday 3rd December, and this magazine covers the months of both December and January. So, in effect two New Years! Therefore, I am not being premature when I say "Happy New Year everyone".

My 'handle', *Rector's Ramblings*, could also be the title of my article for my last article of 2023 and the first one of the New Year. I feel this is quite apt as I want to write about words and our mental health.

We are all affected to one degree or another by what we see and hear in the News and on Social Media. It can be very depressing if all we hear are bad things. Talk of wars, the COVID enquiry, the cost-of-living crisis; all these things affect us in ways we may not even notice. What we do notice is when other people say things that hurt us. They may not wish to intentionally hurt, but once a thing has been said it may not be heard the way the speaker intended. People may criticize thinking that it is critiquing. These are two very different things. They may believe that what they are saying is said to help us. But how it is heard may not. Words and choice of words are important.

We all know the saying "Sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me". We all also know that it is quite wrong! Words are powerful, they affect our wellbeing and that of other people we interact with.

During 1955 J. L. Austin delivered The William James Lectures at Harvard University. His title was *How To Do Things With Words*. The substance of his lecture was taken from Speech Act Theory found in the philosophy of language. In his lectures Austin describes how speech can be divided into three components. Firstly the utterance, that is the sounds made. Secondly how the hearer interprets those sounds, and

thirdly what actions, either emotional or physical, result from that interpretation.

An example may be that a car driver and their passenger are travelling along when the passenger shouts out ‘stop’! Perhaps they had spotted a child about to run across the road.

The utterance of the sound ‘stop’ is heard by the driver who interprets the word to apply the car’s brakes. This they do; the action caused by the speech, which thus prevents crashing into the child.

The above is an example of Speech Act Theory in practice. Why have I gone on about it? To answer that question I want to mention another theory, that of *Self Talk*. *Self Talk theory* says that each time we receive a positive comment we accept it and then forget it, whereas for every negative comment we receive, we repeat it to ourselves six times. If we incorporate *Speech Act Theory* with *Self Talk* it can be found that negative criticism can have a harmful effect on not only those around us, but on ourselves as well. I would therefore invite each and every one of us to think before we speak in every circumstance; to capture each thought for Christ, before it becomes an utterance. In this way I believe that we can support each other and build together better mental health in our society and even make a significant change for the better to many people living alongside us.

Perhaps this is a good thought for a New Year’s Resolution; both for those of us within the church, and for those outside it.

I wish you all a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Yours in Christ,

Reverend John.

*Advent Blessings
and A Happy New Year!*

Notes from The Diocese



Nativity plays- truth or myth

A swaying sensation, a crash and the kindly arms of a teacher picking me up. The year was 1978, and a 6 year old me, giddy with the excitement of being an angel, and forced to stand in my sparkly outfit for what seemed like hours (but was probably minutes), had fainted.

How much of this memory is truth and what has been added over the years I am not sure. Fast forward 30 years, and I am directing a nativity play. The ingredients are still the same: tinsel halos, a doll in a manger, Joseph, Mary, a donkey, innkeepers. Nativity plays have been a staple of my life forever, whether as actor, director, or spectator.

But like my memories of my ill-fated angel role as a child, what of the modern nativity play is truth and what is myth? There is no written record of the events of 1978 when a child fell off a stage, but the facts around Christ's birth were recorded, by the gospel writers. Luke tells us of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, Jesus' birth and the shepherds, while Matthew tells of magi from the east. While most people know that aliens and lobsters are modern additions, many are more fuzzy on the other details. I almost caused a riot in a classroom once when I challenged the children to find the donkey in the Biblical account (look it up- he's not there!). There is also no mention of a stable, innkeepers, kings or animals.

So yes, there are parts of the story that are myth, but what is true? I love nativity plays, not because of the cuteness factor, or the tradition, but because in the midst of the tinsel and tutus, lies the most profound, earth-shattering truth. God took on flesh, to save his people from their sins, and that changed everything.

The incarnation of the Son of God is the most profound truth, around which the history of our world pivots. The nativity play is a glorious celebration of this truth, one that I pray will reignite our hearts this year, refilling us with the profound joy of God's love for his world, and giving us a truly happy Christmas.

Charmian Gamble is one of three Christian Distinctiveness Adviser supporting teachers and leaders in church schools across Lichfield Diocese.

charmian.gamble@lichfield.anglican.org / <https://www.ldbe.co.uk>

Mark my words – all together

*O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence. (Isaiah 64.1)*

This is how we start a new church year. On the first Sunday of Advent, Isaiah's words rip through the air and his prophecy will continue to thunder around us Sunday by Sunday. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus cries 'Keep Awake!' and we hear his passion for this world to flourish and for his followers to take their place on the side of hope.

These cries of hope and determination are set against feelings of anguish and frustration. Surely this year, after months of praying for places of conflict, we recognise that anguish and hope. Perhaps scripture never feels more powerful than in Advent.

The world – and even the church - seem bent on division and conflict. The power and simplicity of scripture can give us strength, purpose and even unity.

I am so lucky to be employed by the diocese to help parishes think about their next steps. I'm advocating several 'next steps' at the moment. One of them is for churches to come together to read the gospel of Mark (the main gospel set for Sunday readings through this year) aloud in one setting. It's simple, humble activity, yet a bold one.

The experience of hearing a whole gospel read aloud can be transformative. It's very different from hearing it week by week, or reading it alone to yourself. We notice the power and awe of the overall story. We notice how the individual stories are framed in the a much bigger story. We understand how the parts we often hear fall into a particular sequence. We feel the ebb and flow of the story, the shifts of gear, and we imagine the disciples' experience much more easily. We notice the distinctiveness of the particular gospel we're listening to. And some parts of the story – perhaps especially some of the apocalyptic teaching – make more sense in their context.

Hearing scripture together is also an act of unity. Whatever your church tradition or theological conviction, any Christian can sit alongside any other Christian to hear the gospel read aloud. If we hope for unity, this is an activity to bring us together in our diversity.

Reading the whole Gospel, perhaps at the start of the year, or in Holy Week, can help frame all the weeks that follow. It can help both preachers and congregations. Understanding the big story helps understand all the individual stories it contains.

Could your church organise a reading of the gospel? Could you work with others around to do this? Who could that be good news for? Local schools and their

parents? Ecumenical efforts? Or simply the discipleship of your own church community?

The gospels were written as whole stories to be heard. Let us receive them in that way, and encounter their power afresh!

Revd Simon Foster leads the Mission team for Lichfield Diocese which works with schools, parishes, fresh expressions, chaplaincies and the cathedral, to energise, resource and support them in mission and evangelism – looking out to and for our communities.

Contact Simon at simon.foster@lichfield.anglican.org or see the team's web pages at www.lichfield.anglican.org/mission.



COUNTRYSIDE MATTERS

—December/January
from ROGER ASHTON

We are approaching the Christmas time of year again and I thought it would be good to give you a flavour

of that through the decades I have known living on a working livestock farm.

Memories of post WW2 Christmas's bring back the austerity of those times, big spending was out and my parents were careful but the enjoyment of being together as a family and inviting close friends and relations to our home was special. Of course there were presents and greeting cards given and received in the wonderful spirit of the holy anniversary. The Christmas church service was so special too and as my father was a Warden at Wem PCC it was important that the whole family attended. The farm animals still needed to be looked after so that had to fit in with everything else going on and it was great to get outside and help. Luckily we did have a 110 volt home generated electricity system to address the short daylight hours

which made life so much more bearable particularly on returning to the warmth of a glowing coal fire in the big farmhouse. School days over the commitment to caring for the cows and younger animals at Christmas time intensified. Through the 1960's the team were our herdsman, myself and father. We prepared enough feed to be strategically placed to make the routine work quicker for Christmas Day and Boxing Day and prayed that severe frost or heavy snow would stay away! The tied cowhouse building with all the hay bales stacked four deep in the bing was always snug and warm and was a comfortable place to milk and feed the cows. That working environment did give us a good appetite, no bad thing with all the extra goodies to eat and drink at Christmas time! I distinctly remember sitting comfortably in the warmth of a big arm chair, having consumed a large roast turkey lunch, watching the Queen give her Christmas address then having to drag myself away to go and see to the afternoon milking, feed the calves and top up the cows feed again, but it did mean I worked that lunch off with all that fresh air and exercise. And the pleasure of returning to the light and warmth of the farmhouse was luxurious.



A Child's Letter to God

Dear God

If you watch in church on Sunday,
I will show you my new shoes.

Tricia





Holly

We tend to ignore holly trees until December, when they brighten up our churchyards, as well as our churches and homes at Christmas time, with their shiny leaves and bright berries. For the rest of the year they are less conspicuous, with dark green leaves, dark brown bark and small white flowers in

the spring. Holly is an interesting tree however. Before botanists brought tree seeds from other countries to our shores, winter foliage was unusual, and all evergreen trees were viewed as special. Use of holly and yew branches for winter decoration is an old custom, probably a mix of a wish to make the place look festive, coupled with superstition. Holly was believed to be a fertility symbol and a charm against witches, goblins and the devil. It was thought unlucky to cut down a holly tree.

Holly has good natural defences with the leaves of a young holly extremely prickly. As the tree matures, the prickles reduce, particularly on higher branches, out of reach of most browsing animals. Holly trees are dioecious meaning that there are male and female trees with the decorative berries only found on the female of course. Holly berries are a vital food source for birds and small mammals such as wood mice and dormice. In some cases, mistle thrushes will vigorously defend a particularly choice holly tree from other birds so have a look in your local burial ground and see if you see a flurry of activity.

If you would like to start digitally recording wildlife in your local burial ground then why not use a churchyard holly tree to get going. Take a look on our website under Be Involved or click here: caringforgodsacre.org.uk/add-your-records to find out what to do. You will need to download the iNaturalist app onto a mobile phone, tablet or laptop. It's helpful to start recording with a familiar species and something that is easy to photograph. Maybe you have children or grandchildren in need of outdoor activities in the Christmas holidays? This could be a way to start exploring the wonderful wildlife

to be found in churchyards, chapel yards and cemeteries.

All the best, Harriet Carty Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor,

harriet@cfga.org.uk, www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk

individuals and groups in the diocese receive 20% members discount on all CfGA materials.

Use the discount code **diomem22**



One Solitary Life

He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in still another village, where he worked in a carpenter's shop until he was thirty. Then for three years he was an itinerant preacher.



He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a house. He didn't go to college. He never visited a big city. He never travelled two hundred miles from the place where he was born. He did none of the things one usually associates with greatness.

He had no credentials but himself. He was only thirty-three when the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to his enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for his clothing, the only property he had on earth. When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Twenty centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race and the leader of mankind's progress.

All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as the One Solitary Life.

TO WISH YOU ALL THE JOYS OF CHRISTMAS AND HAPPINESS FOR THE NEW YEAR

Tricia Bamford
Wem

WEM STORE CUPBOARD
& WEM YOUTH CLUB

invite you to join them for a

CATCH UP LUNCH



Open to anyone who is
new to the Town and
would like to meet new
people
or just have a chance
to have a catch-up with
friends

Please join us for a soup and a sandwich on
SATURDAY 9th DECEMBER 2023
11:30 TO 13:30

At St Peter and St Paul's Church Hall, Wem

THIS EVENT IS FREE OF CHARGE
Booking is helpful but not essential
Please ring 01939 232682 or
e-mail claireglover728@gmail.com
to book or for more information

THE TWO POSTERS ON EITHER SIDE OF THIS NOTICE ARE
FOCUSED ON WEM BUT EMBRACE THE BENEFICE AS A
WHOLE. DO JOIN IN IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO.

WEM STORE CUPBOARD
& WEM YOUTH CLUB

invite you to join them for an

AFTERNOON TEA

On Saturday 30th December 2023 at 3 pm
At St Peter's Church Hall, Wem
This event is free of charge

*Please ring 01939 232733 or
e-mail claireglover728@gmail.com
to book or for more information*

BOOKING ESSENTIAL



Wem Community Choir Sing at River Meadows Nursing Home

On Wednesday 29th November 18 members of Wem Community choir visited River Meadows Nursing Home, at Edgebolton near Shrewsbury sing in the residents' Christmas Season.

With our accompanist Wendy Gonsalkorale, ably keeping us on the straight and narrow, we sang popular carols and Christmas songs. Many of the residents joined in and I was particularly impressed with one lady who sang without referring to the words she had been given. Elaine, Christine and Kim all sang solos and the whole programme, lasting about three quarters of an hour, was very well received.

We were able to chat to the residents after the concert, some of whom were known to us, and we were treated to lovely homemade mince pies.

Altogether a very pleasant and rewarding afternoon which was obviously much appreciated by our audience of residents and staff.

Phoebe



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

The Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, Wem

Wem Tower and Bells Appeal 1964 - 1968

Tom Edwards.

The second and third years of the appeal follow now, and there is more to come in the next issue.

The Second Year of the Appeal

“Halfway There”: Less than twelve months after the first money-raising event (a similar dinner dance held during the previous November) the Tower and Bells Appeal passed the £3,000 mark when a dinner dance held at the Hawkstone Park Hotel raised £114.

A bonfire, barbecue and fireworks held by Tilley parishioners on Guy Fawkes night that year took place on a field belonging to Mr W D Rutter. Attendance at its peak was in the region of one thousand. There were stalls and competitions and the bonfire was lit by children of the parish, Tommy and Bobby Morris, Michael and Christopher France, Sandy Heath, Philip and Tim Rutter and Pam and Victoria Ward. The event raised £183 8s. 8d.

On the 8th December nearly 140 people attended a whist drive in the Market Hall. Arrangements were by Mr and Mrs W C Edwards. Mr W Jones was the M C and Mrs M Strong presented the prizes. The sum of £56 was raised.

In January 1966 Preb and Mrs Morson held an evening party at The Rectory. About a hundred guests contributed £81 to the Tower and Bells Appeal.

A further £90 8s. od. was raised for the appeal during February when the Churchwomen’s Guild and the Mothers’ Union held another joint coffee evening and bring-and-buy sale in the Church Hall. Another concert by the Whitchurch Male Voice Choir held in April raised over £27.

On the 2nd June, Mr J E Johnson, Chairman of the Directors of Wem Motor Company, presented an 18-inch high silver challenge cup to Wem Parish Church. He gave it to encourage youth participation in church social activities. The first holder of the cup was Mr Barry Hawkins of Loppington, winner of a thirty-mile mobile treasure hunt in which twenty-

one cars took part. A clay pigeon shoot also took place which attracted some of the sport's top marksmen, and a barbecue around army field stoves.

The 1966 Rectory Garden Fete took place on the 8th June and was opened by Mrs Parker Leighton of Oswestry, the wife of a former Member of Parliament. After the opening she was presented with a bouquet by five-year old Joy Brisbourne. The event raised £432 15s., bringing the total of the appeal fund to £4,200.

A coffee evening held at Aston Lodge, the home of Mr and Mrs R L Heath, in July raised £30 for the appeal and another coffee evening at the home of Mr and Mrs Pegler, Fernlea, Mill Street, raised £17 10s in September. I see also that the sum of £36 was raised by Messrs W T Smith and G Beaumont in respect of a tombola.

By the end of the second year the total of the appeal fund had reached £4,391 11s. 6d.

The Third Year of the Appeal

A third dinner dance held at the Hawkstone Park Hotel raised over £81 for the appeal - the event once again being a "sell out", with some 110 people attending.

A two-day bring-and-buy sale held in the Lower Church Hall on the 24th November and the 1st December, organised by Mrs H J Lowe, raised a total of £60 5s. for the appeal and a Christmas Whist Drive, organised by Mr and Mrs W C Edwards, raised £52 10s.

In view of steeply rising building costs, the sum needed for the repairs and the re-hanging of the bells had increased to £7,000, including the fees of the architect, Mr George Waters. Although only about £4,500 had been raised it was felt right to go ahead and in December the eight bells left the belfry and were lowered 60 feet to ground level. (This was the first "public appearance" for most of them in over 150 years.) The bells were now ready to go to be tuned, turned and re-hung by John Taylor & Sons of Loughborough, an old-established firm of bell-founders. The old oak beamed frame was also to be removed and replaced by one made of steel. (According to Strong's Wem Almanack of 1941 the bells ranged in weight from 4 cwts, 3 qrs, 18 lbs to 14 cwts for the tenor bell.)

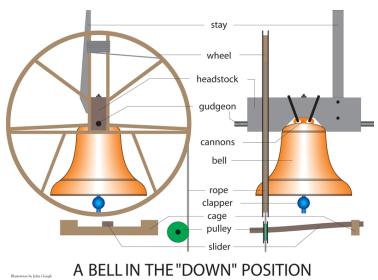
The work on the tower was to be carried out by Townsend & Hodgkiss of Shrewsbury.

Fund-raising continued in February 1967 with another coffee evening and bring-and-buy sale organised jointly by the Mothers' Union and the Churchwomen's Guild which realised £109 1s od.

On the 3rd May a cocktail party at The Oaklands by invitation of Mrs D Pitt-Moore, and attended by over eighty guests, raised £50 15s. 2d. Two other events in aid of the appeal were held on the 31st May. They were a clay pigeon shoot and a road safety car handling exercise. The former was organised by Mr W D Rutter and Mr M C Pate, and the prizes were presented by Miss Dorothy Ward. The car tests were organised by Mr R G O Farmer assisted by Messrs P Smith, C Hill, H Tyler, Clive Jones, W Jones, Ian Edge, J Edwards and N Pegler. The prizes were presented by Mrs J Lane, daughter of Mr J E Johnson, donor of the cup awarded annually by the church for a competitive event. A barbecue arranged by ladies of the church brought the event to a close and the sum of £19 10s od was raised.

The 1967 Rectory Garden Fete, held on the 7th June, was opened by Lady Bridgeman, wife of the Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire. After the opening a bouquet was presented to Lady Bridgeman by Linda Pate. The fete raised the sum of £400.

In September over three hundred people attended a fashion show in Wem Town Hall given by Jayne's of Wem. The show, which was organised by my father (Chairman of the Appeal Committee) together with my mother and Mrs M Strong, Miss Dorothy Ward, Mr W D Rutter and Mrs K Billingham, raised £73 15s. 6d. for the appeal. Over one hundred garments were paraded by Miss Cynthia Reader, Mrs Carol Wainwright, Mrs Helen Hutchings, Mrs Teddie Hill, Mrs Linda Smith and Mrs Connie Davies. Mr J S Hoyle was the compere. My father and I produced the catwalk.



Church Flowers

In the past year a small team of flower arrangers; Olive Kenward, Gill Mellor, Sarah Philpott, Denise Morgan, Thelma Chilcott, Elaine Shaw, Alison Price and Sybil Farmer have enjoyed arranging flowers for church. We have placed pedestals in the vestibule and in front of the pulpit each week (excepting Lent and Advent) and have decorated the window-sills for Easter, the Coronation and Harvest. We are most grateful to those who have sponsored flowers this year:

Alison Price (in memory of her parents)

Kath Ridgway (for her grandson's baptism),

Peter Faulknall (in memory of his wife Doris on their wedding anniversary),

Helen Hornsby (in Memory of her husband Chris),

Rob Ballantyne (in Memory of his wife Janet).

Sheila Gough and Christine Huxley.



If you would like to sponsor a particular date; look out in the new year for a form that I will be putting at back of church so that you can add your name to a specific date. Sponsorship money should be paid to our treasurer Caroline Sinclair.

We met recently to plan for Christmas. On Thursday 21st December from 10:30am we will be arranging pedestals in the vestibule, at back of church and in front of the pulpit. As the Service of 9 Lessons and Carols is to be on Friday 22nd December we will simply be decorating all the window-sills with candles. We would really appreciate help with putting the candles in place on that Thursday. Please speak to Sybil Farmer or Thelma Chilcott if you can help with this or would be interested in helping at festivals or would like to do a pedestal occasionally.

Email Syb.hbcwem@btinternet.com

or 01939 232568

Sybil



Prebendary Neil MacGregor

Canon William remembers a well-loved Rector and Churchman

Neil MacGregor, who died on 7 November, was Rector of Wem and Vicar of Lee Brockhurst between 1980 and 2001, and he is remembered with great affection by many people in the two parishes and further afield. I mourn a good friend, whom I first met when he came to Wem forty three years ago.

He was born on 18 September 1935 and educated at Wade Deacon Grammar School in Widnes. He did his National Service with the East Lancashire Regiment, and in October 1957 he went up to Keble College, Oxford (as did I five years later). He trained for ordination in the Church of England in Wells Theological College, and he was made deacon in 1965 and ordained priest in 1966, both in Wells Cathedral. For five years he was Curate of Bathwick St Mary in Bath. He was then Rector of Oare with Culbone in the Diocese of Bath and Wells and County of Somerset. Oare church is a famous tourist spot as the scene of the shooting of Lorna in the novel *Lorna Doone*, and Culbone church is famous as possibly the smallest parish church in England. The parishes were so small in population that Neil had the unique distinction of being also Curate of nearby Lynton and Lynmouth in the Diocese of Exeter and County of Devon.

In 1974 he moved to the parishes of Kenn and Kingston Seymour near Clevedon, before coming to Wem and Lee in 1980. He was also Priest-in-Charge of Loppington and Newtown and also Rural Dean of Wem and Whitchurch between 1995 and 2001, and also a Prebendary of Lichfield Cathedral between 1997 and 2001. In 2001 he retired to Ludlow, where he enjoyed taking services in many local churches for many years.

His wife, Margaret, died very suddenly a few years ago while shopping in Ludlow. Neil bore his loss with great fortitude, although his later years were clouded by illness. He was a fine scholar, with so many books that they could not all be housed in Wem Rectory, so there was an overflow in the church. At one point Margaret ruled that Neil could only buy a new book if he disposed of an old book, but books were still smuggled into the Rectory without old books being discarded. In his house in Ludlow he had a fine library in the cellar, which he called the Crypt. Neil's letters in

the Parish Magazine were full of literary quotations and much wisdom. He enjoyed using Greek words.

Neil seemed to know everyone in Wem and Lee, and he had a remarkable memory for people. He often returned to Wem to preach at funerals at the request of families and with the ready permission of his successor, the Revd Christopher Cooke. When we used to visit Neil in Ludlow he remembered everyone of whom we spoke. He had a delightful sense of humour and it was always a pleasure to chat with him on the phone, often at considerable length, in recent years.

Our sympathy to his children, Paddy and Lucy, his grandchildren, Oscar, Hector, Sophie, and Alfie, and to all the family and friends.

Neil's funeral will be held in St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, on Monday 4 December at 11.30 a.m.

May this good and kind priest rest in peace and may light perpetual shine upon him.

William Price



The following notice of the funeral arrangements for Celia Camplin was seen in the Whitchurch Herald. As many of you will know Celia was, up to the time of her passing, Reader Emeritus in this Parish. It is hoped that a fuller obituary will be given in the next issue of the magazine.

CAMPLIN Celia Margaret
(formerly Harrison) Nee Willis

On Thursday November 23rd, 2023, peacefully at home surrounded by her family, Celia, aged 82 years, of Alkington Road, Whitchurch.

Beloved wife of the late Pat and Geoff,
much loved mum of Julian, Simon and the late Daniel,
and a devoted nana and granny.

Celia's Thanksgiving Service will be at St Alkmund's Parish Church at 12:30 on 11th December, and follows on from a Service of Committal at Emstrey Crematorium at 10:45 on the same day.

The Organ in Wem Church

This fine three manual organ was built by Messrs Harrison and Harrison of Durham, and it was the gift of Lt Col N Ffarington Eckersley of Trench Hall, Wem, in 1923. It was completely overhauled and cleaned by Messrs Hawkins of Walsall Wood in 1970, but unfortunately in 1983 it was found that persistent rain had penetrated the slates and roofing felt over the organ, damaging parts of the organ which needed between £2,000 and £3,000 to put right. In 1986 rain took its toll again and further repairs were required, again by Messrs Hawkins.

(With thanks to Margaret Keeling-Roberts, *A Short History of the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, Wem*, 1987)

William Price

...And now a century later we celebrated this generous gift to St Peter and St Paul's in the following way

The Celebration of the Organ's Centenary Weekend Oct 28th & 29th at St Peter & St Pauls Church, Wem.

The celebrations kicked off in the afternoon with organ recitals from the church's own organist Glyn Williams and guest organist Alan Viner. Both played brilliantly and entertained to a good sized audience who showed their appreciation with rapturous applause.



Despite the inclement weather, Saturday evening attracted many people who came to listen and watch the very entertaining Shrewsbury Male Voice Choir and the Fauls Singers. Both were excellent and produced a varied programme.



I particularly enjoyed ‘An American Trilogy’ where both groups joined forces, and Glyn came in near the end with the organ. Quite superb! It gave me goose-bumps and the song ‘Mud, mud, glorious mud’ had the whole audience joining in.

An interval incorporating a

glass of red wine, which was very welcome, and a time for singers and audience alike to mingle.

On the Sunday Eve the church held a ‘Songs of Praise’ where parishioners had a chance beforehand to vote for their favourite hymn. A programme of chosen hymns was put together and, led by the church choir and accompanied by organist Glyn Williams, many a great song of praise was lifted up to God. Alleluia! It was a most successful weekend and money was raised for the local Food Bank and the church.

Looking forward to the next musical eve.

Kim Archer



In conjunction with this musical theme,
Denise Jukes introduces our own church choir
and encourages new members

St Peter and St Paul’s Church Choir

The Choir reformed this year in early May with six members and our wonderful organist Mr Glyn Williams. We have been fortunate to welcome 4 more members recently to take our numbers up to 10.

A service to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles on 17th May was our first outing and we have been leading the hymn singing every week since.

We meet every Thursday evening at 7:30 pm in the church for an hour's practice and we are always looking for new members who have the joy of singing at heart. If you are interested in joining us or just coming along to our practices to sing then contact me by e-mail at:

johndeniseandjess@yahoo.co.uk or phone on 01939 235343.

Denise Jukes



Songs of Praise!

On October 29th St Peter and St Paul's held a 'Songs of Praise' evening as a climax to a very successful weekend celebration of the 100th year anniversary of the installation of our organ.

The congregation had been voting for their favourite hymns for several weeks and the top ten were sung on the evening. It was a great night and everyone sang with gusto!

Well done to everyone involved and I'm sure we will hold another Songs of Praise evening very soon.

Denise Jukes



St Peter's C.E. Primary and Nursery School Wem



Hello, from St Peter's School Worship Team.
We are a group of eight, Key Stage 2 children who help to plan and deliver worship at school.
This month we have been working on matching our school values to the Bible.
Our values are **ambition, care, teamwork, honesty, fairness** and **respect**. We thought about the Bible stories that we know and decided that the story of Jesus feeding five thousand people reflected all of our values.
Reverend John came into school and told us the story, which we really enjoyed. His favourite sandwiches are tuna! Now, we are reflecting carefully on what each value looks like in the story. It is really making us think!
Here are the characters that we use to help us to relate to our values. Can you guess which is which?



Who's
Who?

The Parish Church of St Peter, Lee Brockhurst

Autumn Fayre at Lee Brockhurst

Saturday 18th November saw the final fundraising event of 2023 for St Peter's Church. Normally the money raised goes to help with the running costs of the Church but this year the focus has been on raising money to pay for the re-hanging of our two bells.

It was not the best of weather but after a slow start there were plenty of customers to indulge in coffee and mince pies (7 dozen made by Margaret) and be tempted by the items for sale. On this occasion we were happy to have two guest stalls Michael Morgan and his father Brian brought Michael's children's books for sale and Judy and Ellen brought beautiful handmade Christmas and other celebration cards.

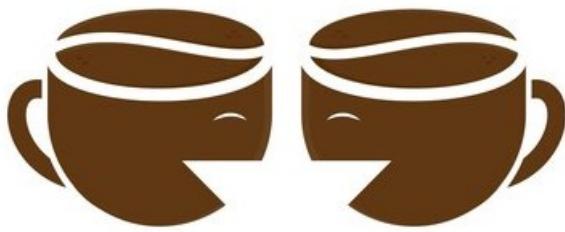
There was a well stocked produce stall manned by Margaret and daughter Rachel, and Bric-a-Brac stall manned by Kim and a Craft Stall manned by Val. Christine supervised the marbles competition which Roger won with 53 marbles in one minute. Robert did valiant service organising the parking and making sure that the Hunt, which was meeting at 11.00, did not pinch our spaces.

Georgina circulated with the Pick a Pocket apron and Sue was busy selling Raffle tickets. Jackie, Alex and Phoebe were in the kitchen and Roger helped out wherever it was necessary.

Later that day Roger was pleased to announce that we had made £526.00 which was much the same as in the previous few years.

Many thanks to all those from the village and further afield who came and to all the helpers listed above.





Coffee and Chat

Now that the 5 pews have been removed from the back of St Peter's Church Lee Brockhurst, albeit only temporarily at present, we have tried to utilise the space made available for social activities during the week. One idea that I had was to open the church on a Wednesday morning, once a month, and invite the villagers for Coffee and Chat.

We started this in September and it has been quite a success. This had been helped by the fact that at almost the same time a Yoga Class was started at the Village Hall. Many of the participants in the Yoga Class live in St Peter's Place, and passing the church as they return from the class, they have dropped in on their way to join us .

I should like to increase the frequency of the Coffee and Chats to, perhaps, twice a month but would need some helpers to make this possible. We will be starting up after Christmas on Wednesday 17th January between 10.30 a.m. and 12.00 midday. Anyone can come and join us for some socialising with no strings attached!

If you would like to help me with the preparation and clearing up and join in the Coffee and Chat please contact me on 07858123669 or phoebe42.lee@gmail.com

Many thanks for your support over the past 3 months.

Best wishes

Phoebe

ST PETER'S CHURCH
LEE BROCKHURST
CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Sunday 17th December
Carol Service – 6.30 p.m.
followed by mulled wine and mince pies
Everyone welcome

Christmas Day
Holy Eucharist
10.30 a.m.





Carol Service at St Peter's, Lee Brockhurst

This year our Carol Service takes place on Sunday 17th December at 6.30 pm. A warm atmosphere is created with many tea lights and candles spread round the church. The service will be taken by our Rector John Jukes and afterwards we will be serving mulled wine and mince pies (non-alcoholic wine and gluten free mince pies will be available)!



Our normal congregation is usually supplemented with a large number of villagers which makes the event particularly special. Do come and join us for this wonderful start to the Christmas season! All are welcome!

The Parish Church of St Luke, Weston-under-Redcastle

This is a photo of Daphne being presented, totally unexpected, with a Gold Award for her 50 years of loyalty and fund raising for NSPCC. She has been the Treasurer for Welsh Border branches and Oswestry NSPCC for 50 years. Daphne has lost count of the funds she and her volunteers have raised—over the years many thousands of pounds. She still has over 100 Children's Blue Collection boxes out amongst many originally young mothers and fathers and children. But now the original children are grown up and married with children of their own, and they are still involved as the giving/collecting culture continues.



Daphne, being a private and a very modest person, was very chuffed to receive the Award. She was told by the presenter that not very many Gold Awards are given nation-wide. What an accolade.

*WELL DONE,
DAPHNE*



WESTON NEWS



St Luke's Carol Service

Come and join us on Christmas Eve
to celebrate the Birth of our Lord
with Readings and Carols

Sunday 24th December at 5 pm
Drinks and Mince Pies
for Everyone
after the service

St Luke's Christmas Day Service

Monday 25th December at 10 am
Holy Eucharist

Just follow the arrows!

Just
in
case
you
receive
this
in TIME!
in the Village Hall



*Merry Christmas, Everyone,
and a
Happy and Joy-filled New Year!*





*FROM FRIDAY 1st DECEMBER
AT ST PETER & ST PAUL'S*

*FROM 1ST DECEMBER TO 15th DECEMBER
CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL*

Please visit our church to see the
Christmas Tree Displays
sponsored by local businesses
and organisations.

Thank you very much
to all our contributors.

The February issue
(electronic AND paper— we hope)
needs your input by the 14th of January,
but definitely no later than 21st, please.
All articles e-mailed to Phoebe Ashton
phoebe42.lee@gmail.com
in Word please