

MARCH 2025

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
The Reverend Edith Quirey
Reverend Mike Cotterell
Prebendary Rob Haarhoff

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

Whilst our website is offline information can be found at
A Church Near You – www.achurchnearyou.com/church/4601/

ST PETER AND ST PAUL'S CHURCH, WEM

Churchwardens

Sybil Farmer 01939 232568 and David Murray 01939 236134

Parish Reader

Katharine Murray

PCC Lay Chair

Sybil Farmer 01939 232568

PCC Treasurer

Caroline Sinclair 01939 232626

Organist

Glyn Williams 01939 234954

Sacristan

June Powell 01939 234412

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



LEE

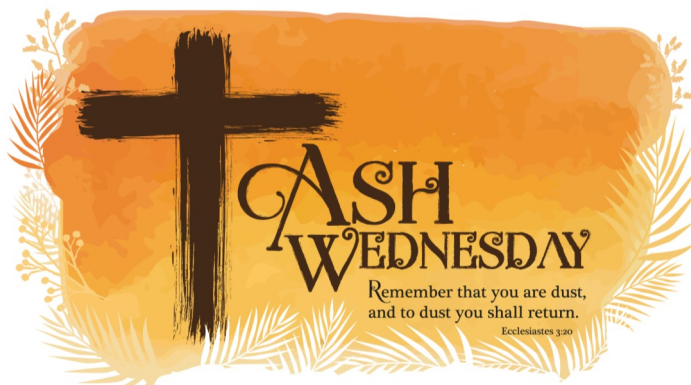


WEM



WESTON

SERVICES IN THE BENEFICE IN MARCH					
DAY	DATE	SEASON	WEM	WESTON	LEE
SUNDAY	2nd	Sunday next before Lent	08:00 HE 09:45 HE	09:30 MP	11:15 HE
WEDNESDAY	5th	Ash Wednesday	19:00 HE with ASHES		
THURSDAY	6th		09:30 HE		
SUNDAY	9th	1st SUNDAY of LENT	08:00 HE 09:45 HE	09:30 HE	11:15 HE
THURSDAY	13th		09:30 HE		
SUNDAY	16th	2nd SUNDAY of LENT	08:00 HE 09:45 HE	09:30 MP	11:15 HE
THURSDAY	20th		09:30 HE		
SUNDAY	23rd	3rd SUNDAY of LENT	08:00 HE 09:45 HE 17:00 P&P	11:00 HE	11:15 MP
THURSDAY	27th		09:30 HE		
SUNDAY	30th	Mothering Sunday	08:00 HE 09:45 HE	09:30 MS	11:15 MS
HE—Holy Eucharist MP—Morning Prayer P&P—Praise & Prayer MS—Mothering Sunday Service					



*The
Beginning
of the
Season
of
Lent*



Notes from the Editor

MARCH 2025



Dear Readers,

So it is nearly March already, how time flies! The natural world has begun to wake up and the gardens are displaying drifts of snowdrops and early daffodils. Lent is only a couple of weeks away and soon it will be Easter. I do hope that the weather settles down and gives us some real spring weather so that gardeners, amateur and professional, can take advantage of the longer, warmer days.

And so to this month's magazine, the subject of God's Green Acre is frogs, now-a-days an all too rare sight in our gardens and the countryside. I cannot remember the last time I saw frog spawn although I do remember seeing some very small frogs hopping about whilst on one of our breaks last year. The last time I saw tadpoles was during Lockdown.

Congratulations to Weston for raising £1700 at their Bridge Drive photos and more information about this further in the magazine. We have included an advert for the Saturday services, held once a month at the Methodist Church, all are welcome further information is supplied by Paul Johnson. Countryside Matters covers the many dilemmas facing the farming community at the moment. Tricia Bamford continues to delight us with the prayers and comments of young children including their novel spelling and grammar.

And finally an interesting article from the Diocese, relating Christian Mission to Death in 'Paradise', is not to be missed!

Best wishes from your Editorial Team

Phoebe

The Rector's Ramblings

Symbolism in a Church Service

What we do in a Church Service and why we do it

Introduction

In last month's magazine I introduced three different ways of learning and suggested that by understanding some of the symbolism in our Church Services we can enhance our enjoyment and worship. I went on to explain why I wear the clothing that I do. Today I will write some more of my understanding of the symbolism within a Church Service.

Candles and The Procession

Candles

Candles are no longer required to light our churches, well mostly not. I have been to a few where they are yet to install electricity.

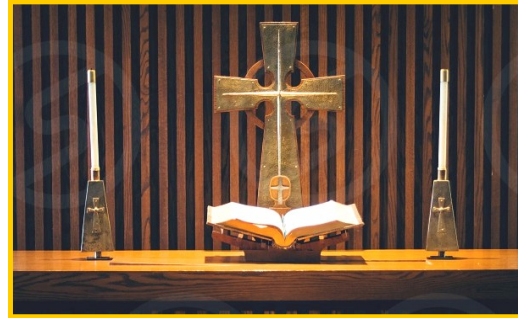
The use of candles in Church has a long history and of course there is much symbolism involved around light. The lit candle represents God's light in a world of darkness. In Scripture Jesus is described as 'The light of the world'. In our liturgy we say: "God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light". In a Service of Holy Baptism, we give a candle and say: "Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God the Father".

There may be a stand with a number of candles for people to light when they say a prayer. This is called a votive candle or prayer candle. These are small candles, typically white or beeswax yellow, intended to be burnt as a votive offering during a private prayer.

There are two main candles on the altar, though there may be more, these point to Jesus being both a human being and God.

They symbolize the light of Jesus Christ going out into the world where believers are to serve.

These two main candles are named the Gospel Candle, and the Epistle candle. Called these because the Gospel was originally read under the light of the Gospel Candle. This is placed on the North Side of the Altar, that is on the left as you look towards the front of the Church. The rest of the service including the readings from the Epistles was read from the light of the Candle on the South Side of the Altar.



Each Easter we light a new Paschal Candle. The candle is called the Paschal candle from the Latin meaning of or pertaining to Easter or to the Passover. This candle is lit for every service in the Fifty Days of Easter, for each Service of Holy Baptism and for each Funeral.

The Paschal candle is the tall candle which usually has the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, Alpha and Omega, and the year on it. Along with incense in the sign of a cross. The incense represents the wounds of Christ, the Alpha and Omega stand for the beginning and the end. And so, we have Jesus is all, the light of the world, the beginning and the end of the year.

In the Church there is often a safe or a lockable cupboard, known as an Ambry or Tabernacle, it is there for the sole purpose of keeping the Reserved Sacrament. That is bread and wine which has been blessed and is reserved for later use when it will be taken out to the sick and housebound. Above the Ambry is the sanctuary lamp. A

light or candle which is always alight when the Reserved Sacrament is in the Ambry. I will write more about The Sacraments in another issue.

The Procession

In many Churches the choir, servers and clergy will process in at the beginning of the Service and out at the end. There is both significance and symbolism in these processions.

For me I see the procession as an excerpt of our pilgrim journey through life. We live most of our lives being Church, outside the church building. The dispersed Church, living, working, playing and praying.



The procession is led by the cross, sometimes there are two acolytes carrying candles. The Book of the Gospels may be carried by another person. If incense is used this too is carried in procession

The procession begins away from the main body of the Nave. The people gather together, there is an opening prayer and the procession moves off. As it comes into the nave and then up to the quire, this symbolises us all coming together as the gathered Church to worship.

At the end of the service, the procession reforms, and leaves through the main body of the nave; symbolising, once again, our moving off to continue our lives outside the church building, taking the love and words of God out into our communities. Once again, we are the church dispersed, living, working, playing and praying in our communities; until we can once again come together as the church gathered to Worship God. This cycle repeating as we pilgrimage through life until we are called home.

Until next time.

Yours in Christ,

Reverend John.

THE CHURCHES OF WEM AND WHITCHURCH RURAL DEANERY

I hope to include an account of each church in Wem and Whitchurch Rural Deanery in issues of this magazine. There are 21 churches in all and I shall treat them in alphabetical order. It would be good if these notes encourage readers to visit the churches.



ST MARY'S CHURCH, ASTLEY

Astley Church is the most southerly church in the Rural Deanery. Until 1860 when it became a parish church it was a chapelry in the large parish of St Mary's in Shrewsbury.

There was a priest in Astley, and presumably a church, at the time of the Domesday Book (1086), but the oldest part of the present church dates from about a century later, and this is the blocked doorway in the south wall. Dr John Leonard in his splendid book on Shropshire churches writes that it is unusual and rather good: 'The hood mould over the doorway shows some dogtooth, and below this is a combination of chevron and battlements motifs. The inner order has round billet. The capitals of the shafts are carved with early stiff-leaf foliage'. The small window to the west of the blocked doorway has the date 1568 and is thus one of the few dateable windows in Shropshire from the reign of Elizabeth I.



Most of the church dates from the fourteenth century, with the vestry from 1830 and the tower from 1837. The church was restored in 1883. The interior of the church was greatly beautified in the 1930s

when the distinguished architect Sir Charles Nicholson designed the attractive rood screen (showing Jesus on the Cross with the Blessed Virgin Mary and St John), the elegant altar rails, and the well-



proportioned altar and triptych (showing Jesus as King with the Blessed Virgin Mary and St John, and on the left St Mary Magdalene and St Elizabeth and on the right St John the Baptist and St Paul). The triptych can be folded back in Lent so that the figures are hidden. At that time several pews were removed from the east end of the church, leaving an almost empty chancel. These fittings reflected the High Church ideas of the Revd Arthur Meggison, who came to Astley in 1926 from the

famous Anglo-Catholic parish of Tonge Moor in Bolton. The 'big six' candles were also a distinguishing feature of Fr Meggison's churchmanship. In the 1980s some pews were moved from the back of the church into the chancel, as was the organ. The smaller altar was installed in 2011 to enable the priest to face the congregation.



The stone work of the east window dates from the fourteenth century and the figures in it date from 1849, being the work of David Evans of Shrewsbury. They are St Michael, King Edgar, and St Catherine. These remind us of the mother church, St Mary's in

Shrewsbury, founded by King Edgar and with its chapels of St Michael and St Catherine. The window was restored in 2016.

In 1919 a new clock was placed in the tower as a War Memorial and the old clock was given to Shrewsbury Museum. The bell was made around 1270, and before the tower was built it hung in a small bell turret. It is possibly the oldest bell in the Diocese of Lichfield, and it was refurbished in 2012 and hung alongside a Victorian bell from a church in Northamptonshire, which strikes the hour and half hour.

The priest's stall is in memory of Fr Meggison and the lectern is in memory of my father, the Revd David Price, Vicar of Astley from 1951 to 1982.

Astley Church is a peaceful holy place and is usually open every day.

William Price

*THE OLD
Astley Church
in about 1790*

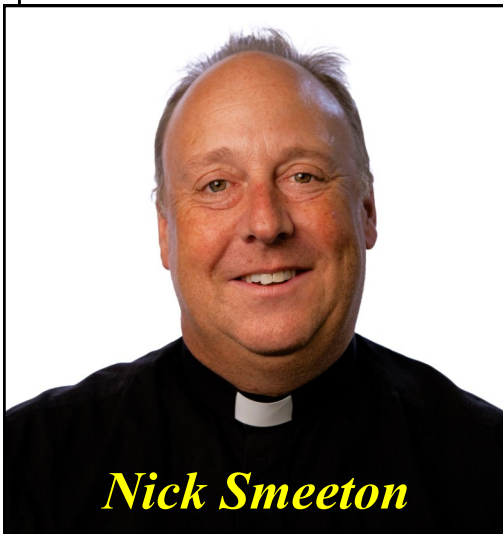


*THE 'NEW'
Astley Church
as it is today*

Notes from The Diocese for March 2025



On the way to paradise



My daughter is a huge fan of the TV show 'Death in Paradise' – which means that I end up watching an awful lot of episodes. The plot doesn't change a lot – each one boiling down to the detective having to work out 'The How? The Why? And the Who?' That is: How the murder was committed, why the victim was killed and, of course, who did it.

I've been reflecting over the last few months, since arriving in Lichfield Diocese, on how this formula applies equally well to the process of developing a diocesan strategy – although the ordering is different.

We know the 'Who' from the outset: Jesus Christ; and we know the 'Why', too. At baptism we promise, amongst other things, to 'Come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life'. Coming to Christ means following Him as a disciple, critically bringing other people into relationship with Him, serving those around us. Our diocesan strategy simply helps us to answer the 'How'. How are we, together as a diocesan family, going to be best able to fulfil our calling as disciples, best able to follow Jesus Christ, best able to bring other people into relationship with Him, and best able to serve those around us in this season.

And the emphasis on this season, is important. Our strategy is not

something that has been written in the last six months. It is the next stage of a process. Making our priorities Developing Discipleship, Encouraging Vocation and Inspiring Evangelism, we embarked on Shaping for Mission from which emerged the principles and goals of our Strategic Framework. The 'How' that we are now answering is about achieving these goals, overcoming the challenges that we learnt about from parish responses to the framework, and realising our vision of a diocese that is purposeful about evangelism, engaging creatively with local communities, becoming more diverse and growing younger.

In 'Death in Paradise' the puzzle is finally solved by some wildly improbable coincidence – perhaps a throwaway remark that suddenly allows the penny to drop. Fortunately, we don't need to rely on such wild improbabilities, so long as our strategy is underpinned and sustained by prayer (of course, they still may happen, such is the adventure on which we are embarking...).

As we follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad, we pray that the two million people in our diocese encounter a church that is confident in the gospel, knows and loves its communities, and is excited to find you, O God already at work in your world. We pray for a church that reflects the richness and variety of those communities. We pray for a church that partners with others in seeking the common good, working for justice as a people of hope.

Revd Canon Nick Smeeton (nick.smeeton@lichfield.anglican.org) joined Lichfield Diocese last September with instructions to play a pivotal role in developing our strategy around the goals set out in the Strategic Framework and achieving our vision.





Time for Frogs!

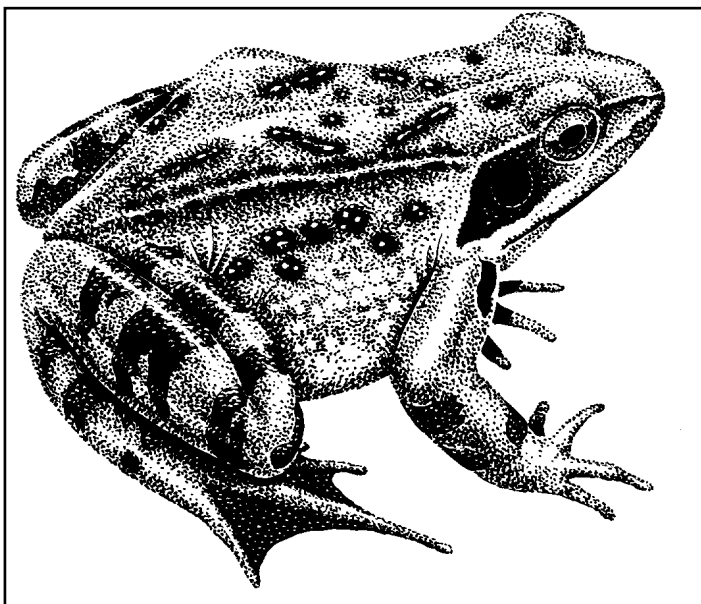
March is the month for frog hunting, they can be seen and heard in ponds around the country with the male frogs the first to move to ponds to wait for the females to arrive. The males call to attract them and once the females have arrived the male will cling onto the female, wrapping around her with his fore limbs, using special 'nuptial pads' for extra grip. The female lays her spawn into the pond, the eggs of which are then immediately fertilised by the male. In March a glance into a pond may reward you with views of male and female frogs as well as developing frogspawn.

What has this got to do with churchyards and cemeteries? Very few burial grounds have ponds and they are rarely suitable places to install one, apart perhaps from a mini-pond in a Belfast sink or similar. They are however important places for amphibians generally, including frogs. Frogs move to ponds to spawn in the spring but spend much of the rest of their time on land and burial grounds provide excellent habitat for them. They can travel up to 500m away from a pond and will live terrestrially, feeding on slugs, snails and worms as well as catching flies or small moths with their sticky tongues. Frogs will hunt for food in grassland, garden areas, woodland and amongst grass tussocks and scrub. Many burial grounds contain some or all of these habitats in close proximity to each other, a

mosaic of different places providing food and shelter depending on the time of year and the weather. Frogs have damp permeable skin and so cannot tolerate many of the chemicals that are used in gardens and farmland. Churchyards and cemeteries tend to be chemical free which also means they can be full of delicious invertebrates. The colour of frogs can be affected by their surroundings and you might find red or even yellow frogs in some places.

So, you will not find frogs in your local churchyard or cemetery in March, but look in garden ponds surrounding a burial ground and you may find a great many who come to the pond to breed then return for most of the year. Churchyards and cemeteries contain lots of frog-sized spaces, cracks and crevices in the ground, monuments such as chest tombs with gaps and holes or spaces beneath the roots of old trees.





Many of these will be used by frogs for overwintering as are churchyard walls, particularly drystone ones. You can help frogs, as well as other amphibians, by making more habitat for them. How about having

some areas of summer meadow or tussocky, rough places round the back and out of sight. Could you pile up some deadwood in a shaded area. A compost heap is also a favourite. Both of these will gently rot down providing excellent shelter with a larder attached!

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



COUNTRYSIDE MATTERS — MARCH 2025

from ROGER ASHTON

THE WAY FORWARD?

Farming and the countryside are at a crossroads. Which way do we go?

Of course it will depend on individual farm circumstances but the general pressures at this present time leave a huge number of possible routes which is not good for stress load. Profitability is being hit by challenging weather, high costs and political decisions. The present support structure has diversified—with land use required to grow food for our 70 million consumers in the UK, supply environmental schemes, plant large areas of trees to address the carbon balance problems, and the use of agricultural land for housing and transport infrastructure.



The environmental schemes, one of which is the Sustainable Farming Incentive, give grant aid to put the land to rest and help carbon level restoration; and this can be more attractive than growing a food crop of low profitability! Where does that fit with the dire need for home grown food and the Country's food security, down from 78% to 62%. As the land available for human food consumption shrinks does that mean more reliance on imports or are we going to intensify even more?

Both will bring challenges to maintaining quality.

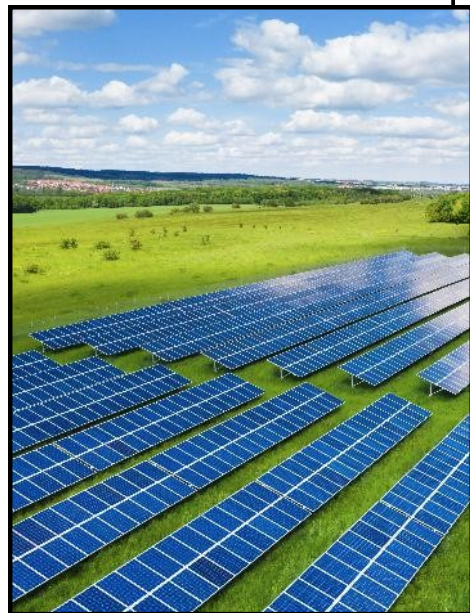
Is the way forward to adopt a farming system that addresses sustainability and regenerative practices, and targets Biodiversity Net Gain (reducing carbon loss)? The organic farmers are really enthusiastic about this; “regen without the chem!”

The world at present is becoming more unstable, there is a distinct possibility of food shortages, unthinkable to the average Supermarket shopper but my age group will remember the rationing that the last World War brought.

Please pray for a way forward.



THIS →



→ ***or THIS***

or BOTH?

Abbé Michel Quoist would like to see with God's eyes:



The Gospel preached in its utter purity exalts, frightens or shocks. It is bound to meet with violent reactions, as it is diametrically opposed to sinful humanity and to the 'world'. When we really hear the Gospel our whole lives must be reassessed, if we are sincere, for the demands of Christ do not countenance half measures.

Matthew 5:11-12

'Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you'

Matthew 10:34

'Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword'

John 15:18-20

'If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember what I told you: "A servant is not greater than his master." If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.

If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also'

I heard a priest, one who lived the Gospel, preach the Gospel.

The humble, the poor, were carried away,

The prominent, the wealthy, were shocked.

And I thought that such preaching of the Gospel would soon frighten away many of those now filling the church, and attract those now shunning it.




It occurred to me that it is a bad sign for a follower of Christ
to be well thought of by conventional “Christians”.
Rather, it would be better if we were singled out as crazy or radical.
It would be better if they pursued us, signed petitions against us,
tried to get rid of us.

This evening, Lord, I am afraid.
I am afraid, for your Gospel is terrible.
It is easy to hear it preached,
It is relatively easy not to be shocked by it.
But it is very difficult to live it.

I am afraid of deluding myself, Lord
I am afraid of being satisfied with my decent little life,
I am afraid of my good habits, for I take them as virtues;
I am afraid of my little efforts, for I take them for progress;
I am afraid of my activities; they make me think I am giving myself.
I am afraid of my clever planning; I take it for success.
I am afraid of my influence, I imagine that it will transform lives;
I am afraid of what I give; it hides what I withhold;
I am afraid, Lord; there are people poorer than I;
Not so well educated,
housed,
heated,
fed,
cared for,
loved.
I am afraid, Lord, for I do not do enough for them,
I do not do everything for them.

I should give everything,
I should give everything till there is not a single pain, a single misery,
a single sin in the world.



I should then give all, Lord, all the time.
I should give my life.

Lord, it is not true, is it?
It is not true for everyone,
I am exaggerating , I must be sensible!

Son, there is only **one** commandment,
For **everyone**:
You shall love with **all** your heart,
with **all** your soul,
with **all** your strength.



from '**Prayers of Life**' by Michel Quoist ISBN 0-7171-0158-4

I couldn't resist this
little robin. It was
one of the fledglings
from our garden last
year. Here's hoping
for another good
bunch this nesting
season.
They have a lot to
contend with!

**ROLL ON SPRING
AND SUMMER!**



World Day of Prayer 2025

will be held in Wem Methodist Church on Friday 7th March 2025 at 4pm. The service has been prepared by Christian women in the Cook Islands.

The theme: *'I made you wonderful'.*



“Wonderfully Made”

by mother and daughter artists
Tarani Napa and Tevairangi Napa

Cook Islands

Our Heavenly Father blessed our islands of the sea. From the northern islands across the ocean to the southern islands, the golden sun shines through

the clear blue skies and birds freely fly. From the bright, white sandy shores all the way to the highest mountain top our islands are abundant with fresh produce and colourful flora and fauna. The lagoons and oceans are bountiful with sea life, fish and gems (like black pearls), which link us to the world.

On each island the mighty coconut tree stands tall, a symbol of strength and goodness. The coconut tree provides for our health and wellbeing. We have discovered how to use every part, from the fronds to the very deep roots for food, drink, medicine, shelter and much more. The coconut tree is essential to our survival and is the tree of life for our people.



We are grateful for the arrival of Christianity to our shores 200 years ago. The gospel of Jesus Christ brought hope, peace and light. In time, our cultures have interwoven with Christianity, and the blessings are evident today. As guardians and caretakers of God's marvellous works, we always treasure these words, 'I made you wonderful'.

Our women play a vital role in keeping our heritage and traditions alive. They are the keepers of talents, teachers and mentors. From mothers to daughters, the cycle of life, faith and love continues here on our islands of paradise. We show our respect and love for God and for one another in harmonies of song and prayer. Our precious Tivaevae quilts represent patience, love and unity. We honour God's love and mercy with hats we wear to church, woven by skilful loving hands from the strands of rito, the young coconut leaf. We adorn ourselves with sweet scented Tiare tropical flowers, made into crowns and garlands. From the heart, we teach and nurture our beloved children, the younger generation, our future.

At the closing of a gathering, our Tongareva elders always say these powerful words of encouragement: '**Kia mau te serenga! Kia mau te napena! Kia mau!**' This means '*hold on tight to who you are, in all aspects of your existence!*' We are wonderfully made by God, and we should cherish all the aspects of who we are!"

PLEASE COME—YOU WILL BE VERY WELCOME!



AN INVITATION
from
WEM METHODIST CHURCH
'Saturday Special' Worship

Maybe you've never heard of it or wondered what it is. Here is a brief description to whet your appetite.

'Saturday Special' worship commenced in February 2018 at Wem Methodist Church. It is a monthly service that is suitable for all, but a particular warm welcome is given to people with dementia. It is also attended by those who are looking for something different, those who cannot attend a service of worship on a Sunday and by those who need access via the local bus which runs on a Saturday.

It is held on the second Saturday of each month, starting at 10.30am. The service lasts approximately half an hour and is followed by refreshments donated by the Co-op. The service consists of well-known hymns, short prayers and a focal point on which the short address is based.

You can be of any faith or none, everyone is welcome.

'It's a lovely way to start a Saturday', said one attendee. Come along and join approx. 20-25 other people who share a short time together in song, prayer and worship in a relaxed atmosphere. Look forward to seeing you.

Please contact Ann and Paul Johnson for more information

07783 299293.

FUTURE SERVICES

**Saturday 8th March,
Saturday 10th May,
Saturday 12th July,
Saturday 13th September,
Saturday 8th November,**

**Saturday 12th April
Saturday 14th June
Saturday 9th August
Saturday 11th October
Saturday 13th December**



From the Friends of
Whitchurch Road
Cemetery

COFFEE MORNING

SATURDAY 22ND MARCH 2025

9.30 a.m. – 12.00 noon

IN THE METHODIST CHURCH HALL



Bric-a-brac, tombola, cakes, produce, raffle etc.
Free admission

**All welcome! Please support us and help to
raise funds for ongoing improvements and
maintenance of the cemetery.**



It is lovely to see the Spring flowers emerging at Whitchurch Road Cemetery! We are now making plans for 2025, and we will work hard to manage the grassland in a way that encourages wildlife whilst keeping the graves accessible. We plan to repair the perimeter fence to the North of the site, it is badly damaged and several fence posts are leaning precariously. We will also repair the old iron and wood bench, sited on the left alongside the main path. We will continue to maintain the large compost area in a sustainable way to ensure year-round compost, and provide this free within our community. We are also hoping to plant new trees around the site. New volunteers are always welcome, if you are interested, please get in touch, our details are on the cemetery notice board.



CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS TO GOD

Dear God

Maybe Cain and Abel would not kill each other so much if they had their own rooms
It works with my brother

Larry



Dear God, Please Send
Dennis Clark to a different
camp this year. Peter

Dear God I wish that there wasn't no
such thing as sin
I wish that there was not no such thing
of war

Tim M age 9



*Trish reminds me that these are as written
—spellings and all!*

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A Letter of Thanks and a report-back from David Hardham, concerning the Ride+Stride completed in September last year. (We were there!)

Dear Everyone,

Our Treasurer announced last week that we (you) raised a Grand Total of **£38,446.72** from our Ride+Stride event last September.

THIS IS A RECORD! Congratulations.

Thank you, everyone who did sponsored walks, rides, or drives. Visiting some of our magnificent churches.

And thank you, everyone who had open churches.

Even if you had only a few visitors (or none at all) it is important for churches to be open on “The Day” if it's possible to do so. Otherwise we could not have the R+S event, promising that our churches will be open.

All £38,446 is for churches: **50% of the sponsorship money has been returned to the participating churches**, and all the rest is for the Trust to award grants for church repairs & improvements.

[RIDE+STRIDE is on Saturday 13 Sept this year.](#)

Please help us to keep up the momentum. Please consider doing a sponsored walk, ride, or drive on the 13th (or another day if the 13th is not possible for you). Even if your church is closed for repairs, or a wedding, or anything, you can still do sponsored, church-based travelling. I will email in a few weeks with full details of how to get involved with both aspects of R+S - The open churches. And the sponsored visiting.

In 2024 we awarded grants of over £135,000. Our successful Ride+Stride will help us to do similar in 2025. The photos below are **Bishop Richard** (Hereford) on his Harley-Davidson during his ‘Ride’ last September, visiting 11 churches to support our R+S event. Thank you, Bishop! His pillion-rider was sponsored and all of it went to the Trust (none to any individual church).

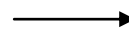
I know...I was that pillion rider, having not ridden pillion since 1969.

(I did an ordinary sponsored walk over the Long Mynd on the Sunday).

Warm regards,

David (Hardham)

(Trustee - Shropshire Historic Churches Trust, & County Organiser for Ride+Stride)



David Hardham, describing his 'ride' in his contribution in the Shropshire Star, said,

"We were zig-zagging to some main settlements in the east-centre of the county: Madeley, Broseley, Much Wenlock, Bridgnorth, Highley, Cleobury Mortimer and Tenbury. These churches are in Bishop Richard's Diocese, plus the Methodists in Bridgnorth. Ride+Stride is 'ecumenical', and is the main annual fundraiser for the Trust, aiming to be a fun day when people can visit our open churches and try not to eat too many cakes and biscuits!

"Jan and Jeanette from Madeley dressed up as 'busy bees' and were sponsored to go to six nearby churches all beginning with B – Badger, Barrow, Beckbury, Boningale, Broseley, and Buildwas. They met welcomers at three; two were unstaffed but were open with welcome refreshments; only one was closed. So we are getting the message across".



And the pillion ride?

"It's a bucket list sort of thing," added David, "I loved every minute of it. I'm doing my own walk - being sponsored to walk over the Long Mynd. But I hope I don't meet my 'bucket' just yet!"

ANY TAKERS ?

sctgoffice@gmail.com

January 2025

OUR FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS

We urgently need new blood.

The group of 6 which keeps SCTG up and running has a cumulative age of over 400 years, and without Richard, the youngest member, our average age would be 78. We cannot guarantee to be here in three years time to prepare the 2028 brochure, so we must have new members to keep going.

The job is not difficult and the work is shared. At present we have a reliable treasurer, a website manager, and a wonderful secretary. But we need to move on. We need two or three people to join us. There are 5 or 6 meetings a year, often at Shrewsbury Cathedral as we are all scattered across the county. We often meet for lunch before our meetings so it is sociable as well as businesslike.

A Guide to Shropshire's Churches has been widely praised by both visitors and tourism experts; if we cannot attract anyone then the 2025 brochure may be the last you pick up. But we are putting this to you now, being realistic about the probable situation if no-one comes forward. As it says at the beginning, the future of SCTG is in your hands.

So please publicise this to your congregation and in your magazine. Do you know someone in your church, possibly recently retired, who cares strongly about the welcome that we offer to visitors, and who would like our wonderful Shropshire churches to be more widely known?



Annual General Meeting

Our AGM is planned for 27th March in the Bradbury Room at Meole Brace Church, which is outside the town centre of Shrewsbury and has parking. Your new brochures, covering the next 3 years – 2025-2027 - will be there for collection. Someone from your parish should pick them up, or could make an arrangement with neighbouring churches.

Your church should have received a copy of your entry in the new brochure. Please would you make sure this has been checked for accuracy, If you want to change anything, please let us know as soon as if possible.

How To Be An Open Church

<https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/campaign/our-updates/how-be-open-church>

At the online page above you will find an article “how to be an open church” which is well worth reading. There are other ‘blogs’ here that you may find useful too. Take a look.



The Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, Wem

FROM WEM PCC

The PCC has met twice since the last report, as we approach the Annual Meetings which will be on Thursday 27 March at 7.30pm in the Church. Put the date in your diary now! It's your chance to have a say, by electing officers and members of the PCC, as well as to raise any issues about the governance of the church. Hopefully, by the time this is published, everyone who wants to be able to vote at the meeting will have filled in the appropriate form and returned it to Neil Price, the Electoral Roll Officer, or posted it in the white box at the back of the church. Neil is retiring this year, so finding a replacement for him will be one of the jobs of the new PCC. We also need a Treasurer to take over from Caroline Sinclair, who has nobly and faithfully done the job for the last 15 years, and for Katharine Murray as Secretary.

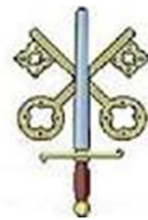
One of the tasks of the APCM will be to receive the Accounts and Finance Report for the past year. We live in difficult times for many people, and that is reflected in our life together as a church. Although we hold reserves, and the church's running costs have been very tightly controlled, the outlook is causing some concern. With an expensive building to run and maintain, we need to face this together and find solutions.

We have all been aware, in colder spells this winter, how fingers, toes and even noses can suffer during an hour or so sitting in a service. We also have an obligation to keep our carbon footprint down in these times of climate emergency. The gas boiler is old, and although it still works for us, it is not the most efficient form of heating. The PCC has been discussing a number of options, none of which are cheap or easy in such a large building. Perhaps you have ideas or expertise on the subject. If so, the Wardens would love to hear from you.

One more date for your diary: on Saturday, 15 March, from 10am, a working party is needed to give the church a spring clean in preparation for Easter. If you are able to wield a vacuum cleaner, broom or feather duster, please come along. With many willing helpers it can even be fun.



St Peter & St Paul's Parish Church



SUNDAYS

08:00 Holy Communion

09:45 Sung Eucharist

4th SUNDAY

17:00 Prayer & Praise

THURSDAYS

09:30 Holy Communion

5th MARCH—ASH WEDNESDAY

19:00 Holy Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes

FRIDAY 7th MARCH

16:00 Women's World Day of Prayer
at
Wem Methodist Church

30th MARCH—MOTHERING SUNDAY

09:45 Family Eucharist

SUNDAY 6th APRIL

17:00 Songs of Praise

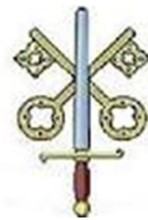
You are welcome to join us at any of our services!



“Growing in Faith, Hope and Love”



St Peter & St Paul's Parish Church



MARCH 2025

EVENTS

COFFEE MORNINGS

22nd March

10:00 – 12:00 in the Church Hall

ST DAVID'S DAY CONCERT

19:00 on Saturday 1st March

Gallery Singers

Tickets £10 available on the door

TUESDAY 4th MARCH

SHROVE TUESDAY

15:30-17:00 Pancakes in the Church Hall

THURSDAYS IN LENT

March 6, 13, 20, April 3, 10

In the Church Hall

12:00 – 13:00 Lent Lunches

13:00-14:00 Lent Course



“Growing in Faith, Hope and Love”

WHAT'S ON IN THE PARISH



Sunday February 24th
at 5 pm in the Church
*Please come along for a quiet
time together*

******* IMPORTANT NOTICE *******
FOR THE LAST TIME!

The Church of England Electoral Roll - New Roll 2025

The electoral roll is revised annually with minor amendments such as a change of address. However, to ensure that its contents remain substantially correct, every sixth year (starting 2025) a new electoral roll is created from scratch and **all potential members need to re-apply by completing an "Application for Enrolment" form (in blue folder at rear of the church) by Monday 3rd March 2025.**

Once completed please post your application in the white post box at rear of Church.

If you have any questions, please contact the **Electoral Roll officer, Neil Price**, Tel 07973 267596 email: neilprice17661@gmail.com or speak to the Clergy or Church Wardens.

MARCH COFFEE MORNING

10:00 –12:00

IN ST PETER AND ST PAUL'S
CHURCH HALL

SATURDAY 22nd MARCH

Please join us for Coffee
and a Chat

TOMBOLA Raffle

Bric à Brac

*Homemade Cakes
Jams, Marmalades
Chutneys*

SS Peter
& Paul's
Church,
Wem

Growing
in
Faith,
Hope
and
Love

The Parish Church of St Peter, Lee Brockhurst

St Peter's Church



Come and join us here on Wednesdays

19th March,

16th April, 21st May

for "Coffee and Chat"

Any time between 10.30 and 12.00

No charge but donations to the church welcomed

For further information ring 07858123669



St Peter's Hearing Loop

For many years the hearing loop system at St Peter's has been defunct. As the organist I sit at the back and because I have hearing impairment I often struggle to hear what is being said at the front of the church. So after



the 5 pew removal and the refurbishment of the bells we decided to reinstate the Hearing Loop system. An initial discussion and inspection by a local firm confirmed that the amplification unit was not working and as some of the loop wiring had been damaged when the pews were removed a completely new system was needed. Two quotes were obtained and although the one accepted was from a company at some distance from Wem we decided to go with this one as the company specialised in AV and Audio installations in churches.

The next hurdle was to obtain an Archdeacon's Licence for the work as it did not require a Faculty as replacement hearing loops are on List B! Simple, not really! However, after a month of communication with the Diocese, and the sending of over ten photographs and a ground plan, the necessary permission was obtained. The work was completed within a day and only a few days after the permission was granted.

The system was christened a couple of Sundays ago and works but unfortunately I think my hearing aids are not properly tuned and although I can hear the voices much better there is a lot of interference. I shall persevere until I can get an appointment with the Voluntary Hearing Support Group which visits Wem Library every third Thursday. However, bookings are essential. I will report progress in the April magazine.

Phoebe

Lee Brockhurst WI News

At our first meeting of 2025, we were charmed by an authentic and amusing talk by Emma Spenser about the crucial work done by the Women's Land Army during the first and second World wars. This movement was set up to ensure that there were sufficient food supplies available on the homefront given that torpedoes were destroying any imported goods to Britain.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 18th February January where we will be holding our AGM. Our Book Club will meet up on Monday 27th January and our Craft Club on 4th February to enjoy raffia weaving. This year marks our LBWI 75th Anniversary so we have lots of celebrations planned, together with an April outing to the Gladstone Pottery Museum, alongside our Anniversary Celebration in June.

We always welcome visitors to join in the fun and friendship at Lee Brockhurst; all meetings take place at Lee Brockhurst unless otherwise stated.

Lee Brockhurst WI News February 2025

Lee Brockhurst WI met for their AGM at our February meeting after which we enjoyed refreshments whilst learning about the hidden gems of our capital city London via a WI broadcast.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 18th March at 7.30pm where we will hear the amazing story of Michael McCarthy, who despite enduring a near death collision, takes part in marathon running, mountain climbing, book writing and is even an Olympic Gold Medallist.

Our Book Club will meet up next on Monday 10th March and our Craft Club on Tuesday 4th March.

When the weather brightens up, our Summer Strollers will reconvene to enjoy the array of beautiful walks here in North Shropshire.

This year marks our LBWI 75th Anniversary so we have lots of celebrations planned, together with an April outing to the Gladstone Pottery Museum, alongside our Anniversary Afternoon Tea Celebration in June, we also have a Craft Day on 17th May where we

will be creating Jackfield tiles and enamelled jewellery.
We always welcome visitors to join in the fun and friendship at Lee Brockhurst; all meetings take place at Lee Brockhurst unless otherwise stated.



If you would like to know more about our lively, friendly group then please contact Julie Woolfenden on 01939 200237 or jjwoolfenden@gmail.com who will be very happy to help.

NOTICE

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL COUNCIL MEETING

The Parochial Church Council of St Peter's Church, Lee Brockhurst will be holding their Annual Parochial Council Meeting on Thursday 20th March 2025 at 7.00 pm in the Village Hall, Lee Brockhurst.

All Parishioners are welcome but only those whose names appear on the New Electoral Roll will have the right to vote, except for the appointment of the two Church Wardens when everyone has the right to vote.

Light refreshments will be served before the meeting.

The Parish Church of St Luke,

Weston-under-Redcastle

WESTON NEWS



BRIDGE DAY

**WESTON HAD A VERY SUCCESSFUL
FUNDRAISING EVENT
AT HAWKSTONE PARK HOTEL ON
THURSDAY 13TH FEBRUARY**

**THERE WERE 26 TABLES OF 4 PLAYERS
TAKING PART**

**ONE SESSION OF BRIDGE IN AM AND
ONE IN PM
WITH A DELICIOUS HOME MADE
LUNCH IN BETWEEN
£1700 WAS RAISED,**



**THE PROCEEDS WERE GIVEN TO
THE SEVERN HOSPICE AND ST LUKE'S
CHURCH**

**MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO CAME TO
PLAY BRIDGE AND SUPPORTED US,
AND TO THOSE WHO DONATED
GENEROUSLY FOR THE PRIZES**



**OUR SPECIAL THANKS TO
PAM AND DAVID HILES
WHO ORGANISED THE DAY,
AND TO THEIR MANY HELPERS
A VERY GOOD DAY WAS HAD BY ALL!**

JUST A LITTLE NOTE TO KEEP YOU ALL IN TOUCH

THE VILLAGE SHOW IS PLANNED FOR
SUNDAY AUGUST 3RD 2025
ON THE CITADEL SHOWGROUND.

THE COMMITTEE HAS MET THIS WEEK
TO START PLANNING WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE,
WHEN AND BY WHOM, AND WILL MEET AGAIN AT THE
BEGINNING OF MARCH.

AN IDEA HAS BEEN PUT FORWARD TO HELP SPREAD
THE WORKLOAD AND TO INCLUDE AS MANY PEOPLE AS
POSSIBLE IN A SMALL WAY,

THE SHOW CAN BE DIVIDED UP INTO MANY
SECTIONS; ENTERTAINMENT, CATERING, STEWARDS,
FIELD PREPARATION, PUBLICITY, SPONSORSHIP,
ETC, ETC, ETC. IT IS HOPED THAT EACH SECTION
COULD HAVE A SMALL GROUP OR TEAM WHO MEET AND
PLAN AND TO MAKE IT HAPPEN!

THANK YOU TO THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE PUT YOUR
NAMES DOWN ALREADY. IF ANY OTHERS OF YOU
WOULD LIKE TO GET INVOLVED PLEASE LET US KNOW.
WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR NEW IDEAS TOO.

THE SHOW IS VERY MUCH A CHARITY EVENT,
AND ALL MONEY RAISED IS DISTRIBUTED.
WE HAVE RAISED MORE THAN £10,000 EACH YEAR
RECENTLY, AMAZING FOR A SMALL VILLAGE DON'T
YOU THINK!!!!!!



THE PEACE

*To crown all things there must be love,
to bind all together and complete the whole.
Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts.*

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

Thank you very much
to all our contributors.

The April Issue
needs your input by the **18th of March,**
but definitely no later than 23rd, please.

All articles e-mailed to Phoebe Ashton

phoebe42.lee@gmail.com

In Word, please, and any Pictures as jpeg's