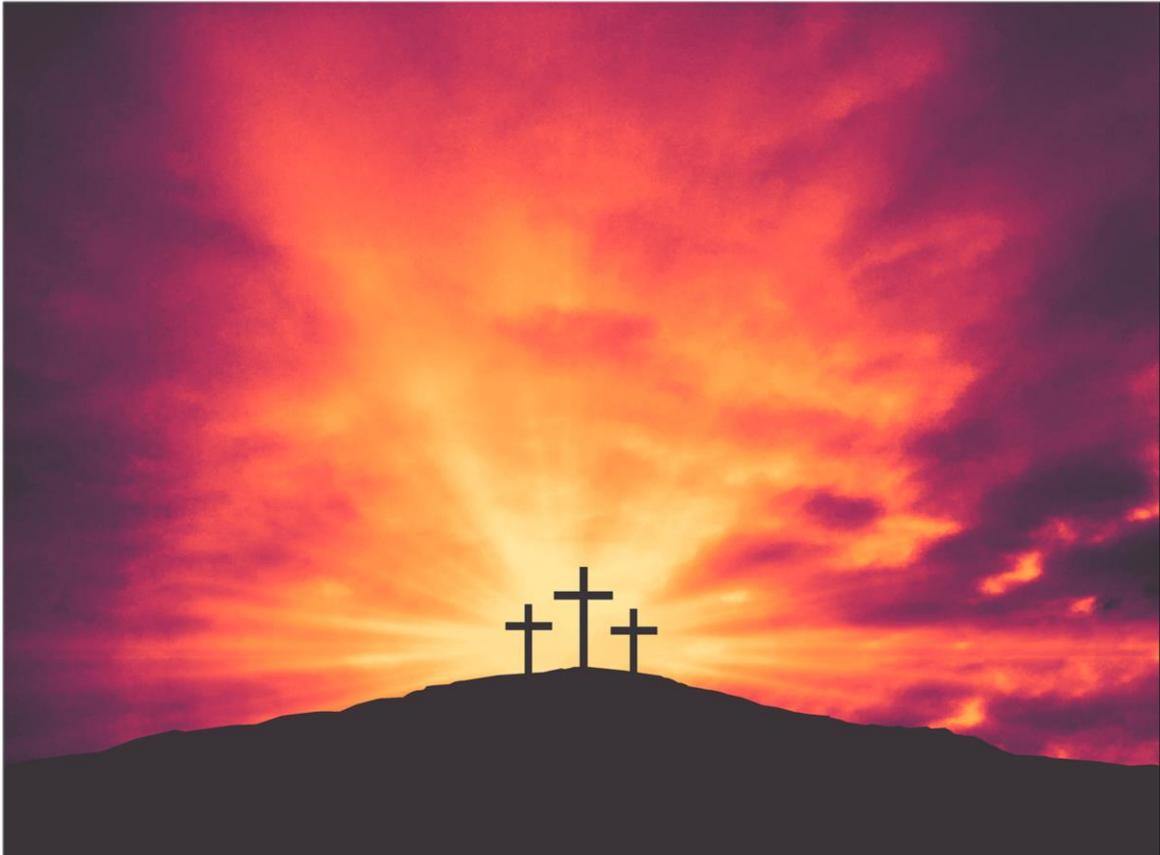


The LINK

APRIL 2023



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

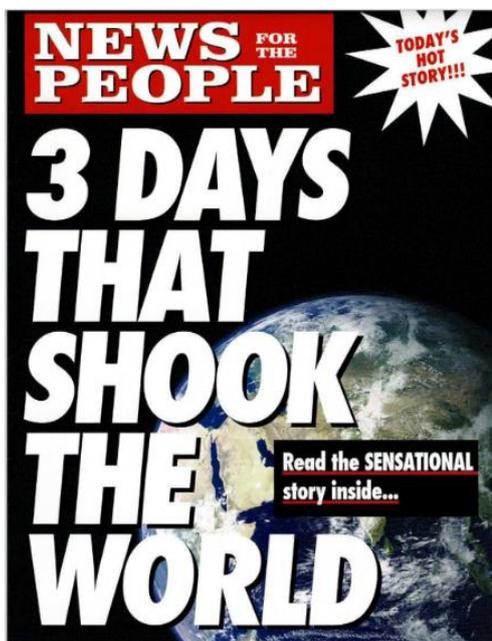
3 DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

Dear Friends,

As we look forward to Easter, we remember events that are both the most horrible cruel injustice and, at the same time, the most wonderful life-changing good news.

We will reflect again on the truly ghastly events that led to Good Friday – how Jesus was betrayed, falsely accused, beaten, abused, publicly mocked then left to die an agonising death on the cross.

We will also remember how, on the third day, Jesus rose to life again, as he had predicted ... how many of his followers saw him risen to life.



We will be offering, at our services, a booklet called, “3 Days that Shook the World”. It is written in the style of a newspaper and lays out, simply and clearly, the evidence for Jesus’ resurrection – the facts that lead many to believe that Jesus is alive today.

And it asks what this means for us, namely, that ...

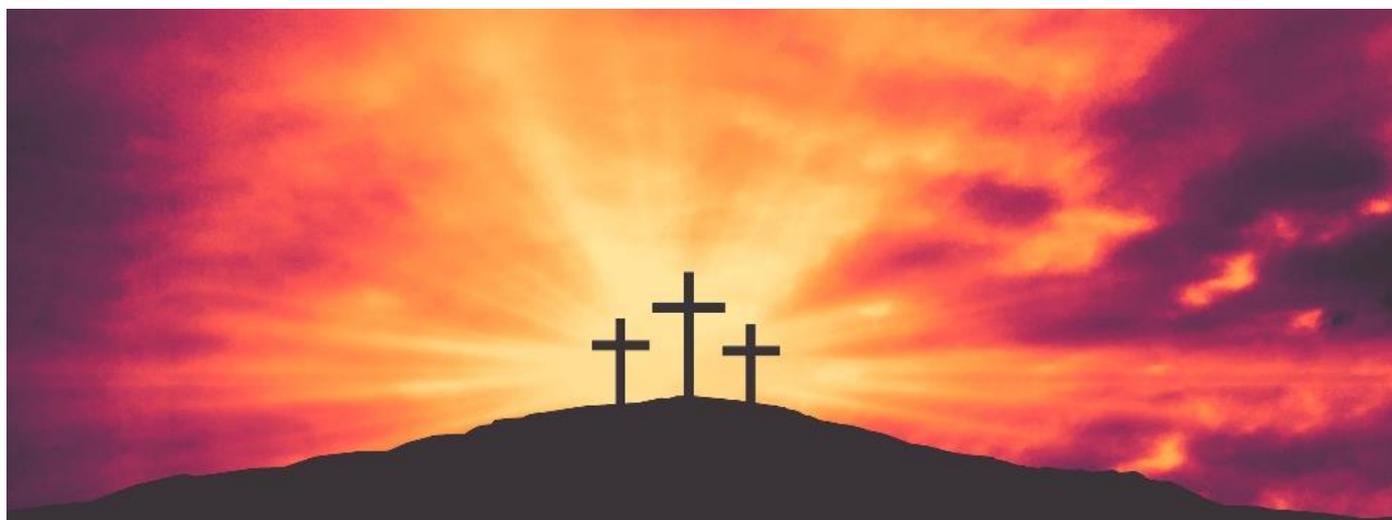
- ❖ We no longer need fear death – the doorway to heaven is open to us
- ❖ We no longer live just for ourselves – there is joy in living for Jesus
- ❖ We are no longer alone – Jesus will be with us

We hope you will be able to join us for some of our Easter services (see details on the next page). Do please think whether there is anyone you could invite to join you at church this Easter weekend.

Wishing you every blessing this Easter time,

Nigel





Easter services at St Michael's

Thurs 6th April – Maundy Thursday

8.00pm – Holy Communion

Friday 7th April – Good Friday

10am – United Service at St Michael's Braintree followed by a Walk of Witness to George Yard

3.00pm – An Hour by the Cross

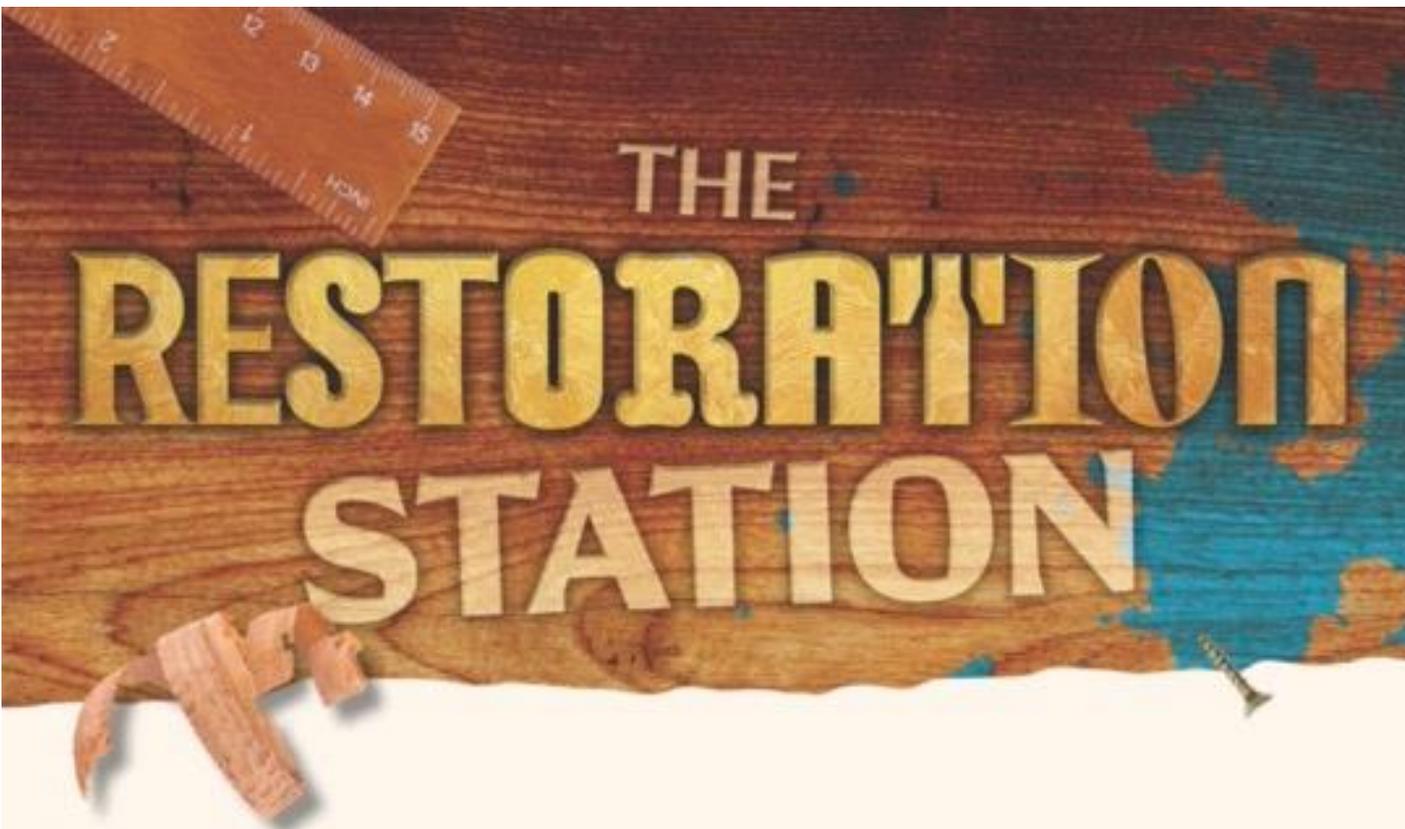
Sunday 9th April – Easter Day

8.00am – Holy Communion

10.00am – Easter Family Praise

6.30pm – Holy Communion

Everyone is most welcome to join us



THE
RESTORATION
STATION

Monday 3rd to Wednesday 5th April

9:30 to 12:30

St Michael's Church House

**Join us for another
Spring SMASH Club!**

**3 mornings of bible teachings,
games, craft and more!**



To sign up go to:

www.stmichaelsbtrees.co.uk

MISSION OF THE MONTH

tearfund

Tearfund is a Christian charity that partners with churches in more than 50 of the world's poorest countries. They tackle poverty through sustainable development, responding to disasters, and challenging injustice. They believe that poverty is not God's plan, and an end to extreme poverty is possible.

Tearfund is committed to working with the local church and believes in the church's limitless potential for outreach and influence for change through and in its community. They believe in supporting the church, at local and national levels, to carry out its calling to be salt and light in the world and serve those living in poverty. They believe that poverty exists as a result of broken relationships with God, ourselves, others and creation. The church has a key role to play in helping to restore these four broken relationships, bringing about whole-life transformation to individuals and communities.

Tearfund follow Jesus wherever the need is greatest, working through a global network of partners so that hope, justice and dignity are restored and there has been extraordinary success. In more than 50 years, thanks to generous supporters, vast numbers of communities have been transformed. Between 2006 and 2016, 32 million lives were transformed through community projects. Together Tearfund have supported people on the brink of disaster to become more resilient, self-sufficient and empowered boldly speaking up for their rights. God calls on us to love one another and wants us as churches and individuals to play our part in building His kingdom on earth by praying, taking action and giving.

With snow, sleet and cold temperatures recently, it still feels like winter. Yet, the first signs of spring are here, bringing hope. However, as we enjoy longer evenings and signs of new life, others are currently experiencing some of their darkest days.

The powerful earthquake in Turkey and Syria has left millions of people at the mercy of a freezing winter as their homes have been reduced to rubble. More

than 35,000 people have lost their lives. 'In Aleppo, many hospitals and medical centres had been destroyed during the conflict and haven't been rebuilt yet,'



explains Martin Leach, who leads Tearfund's work in the region. 'People were already extremely vulnerable, so this earthquake is a crisis on top of a crisis.' From shelter to food and warm clothing, the needs are enormous – but prayer can make a difference. Tearfund's local church partner is responding now. There are four areas we can focus our prayers on: for the **emergency response**; for **people affected by the earthquake**; for the **church in Syria** who are responding; and for **peace**.

Matthew 11:28-30:

'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.'

If you would like to learn more, please visit the www.tearfund.org website. Or if you would like to sign up for the weekly One Voice in Prayer email please go to tearfund.org/onevoice.

Margaret Kinniburgh - St Michael's Tearfund rep

“WE’VE GROWN CLOSER TOGETHER”

Fathers and sons do not always get on with each other. Yes, if you are 9 or 10 years old, fathers are great. Fathers teach their children to ride a bike, how to fish, take their daughters to see West Ham. They may even entrust their offspring with their most treasured possession – they are allowed to drive his car!

JUMP A FEW YEARS

Dad is old. Cycling is out of the question, fishing is too damp for his old bones. Now you drive him to his hospital appointments. Daughters especially drop in to see if the ‘Aged P’ (with apologies to Charles Dickens) is OK. Then the old chap smiles from his chair, remembering years past and says, ‘We have grown closer together’.

GOD OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

The longer we are in the Christian life, the better it gets. We get to know God better. In fact we might say we have grown closer together.

God doesn’t start out as our heavenly Father. We have to beware of saying that God is the Father of all men and women. To be sure, we are all born in the image of God, but that doesn’t make us naturally the children of God. Heaven is not our natural home. It is not the place we end up automatically when we die. We are not fit for it and God in his holiness and justice must bar and bolt the door.

THE GOOD NEWS OF ADOPTION

However, God still loves us and wants to welcome into his family. This is where our elder Brother comes in. Jesus Christ died on cross. Every springtime we are celebrating this. Good Friday calls us again to look at the account of Jesus death. He is called our 'Brother'. (Have a look in the New Testament at Hebrews 2:11 & 12). God the Father's verdict against us for all the wrong things we do and think, and the right we fail to do, is death. That's the price we have to pay.

'THE PRICE IS PAID'.

This gigantic price is written against my name, but up-steps my Brother and pays the price. My Brother has been sent by God the Father. God want his own verdict to be settled so that we be brought home. Or, as the New Testament puts it, we might be 'adopted' into his family.

WE HAVE GROWN CLOSER TOGETHER.

The way back to God starts when we come to Jesus Christ who died on that cross. Coming to him who died for us, asking to be forgiven is the way into knowing God as Father. The genuine Christian has done just that. And then as the years go by, we enjoy the pleasure of growing closer to God our heavenly Father.

Happy Easter,

Stephen Bailey

FARMING SEASONS

After a record sunny winter and a dry February we have just had a very wet March with some parts experiencing twice the average rainfall! Despite this the wheat crops in particular are looking well, and all the recent rainfall has helped wash in the first applications of fertilizer. At this early stage I am optimistic for a good harvest, but being so early in the season it's total guesswork.



Oil seed rape beginning to flower – end of March

Following on from last month's article about the RABI charity, this month I wanted to look at another farming charity known as FCN or the Farming Community Network that supports the farming community through difficult times. After reading the March article, David from Suffolk, contacted me and told me about FCN. David is a retired farmer and he has also been a volunteer for the organisation. They have a network of over 400 volunteers across England and Wales, many of whom are involved in farming or have

close links with agriculture, and therefore have an understanding of the issues that farmers, farm workers and farming families regularly face. The volunteers will 'walk with' anyone who seeks support and help them find a positive way through their problems.

The charity has Christian foundations and their County Chaplain is the Reverend Canon Janet Nicholls, whom I have known for many years and lives near me! Reverend Janet is also an active volunteer and has had official training from the FCN in listening skills and works as a case worker, which can mean providing on farm help. There are other ways people can volunteer, for example some may offer their time as fundraisers, while there are around 40 people who man the helpline, which is available 365 days a year from 7am until 11pm. The case workers are not referred to as councillors as they do not have the required specific qualification, and all the cases are dealt with in strict confidence. FCN also works closely with DEFRA (the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs) and it is involved with the county harvest festival each year. They will also have a stand at the Essex Young Farmers show.

I wrongly imagined when I wrote the article last month that many of the problems would be in other parts of the country such as small hill farmers, who could be in financial distress and struggling with day to day problems on their farm. However, there are farmers everywhere who sometimes need help, although the problems tend to be different depending on the farming area. Reverend Janet told me that farmers in this area can be particularly affected by loneliness and isolation, because they can spend long hours in their tractors on arable farms not seeing anyone.

Recently, FCN have been providing training for suicide prevention as the industry sadly has a particularly high suicide rate. Although the charity deals with a wide variety of problems mental

health can play a large role and poor mental well-being, including stress, anxiety and depression are subjects we all recognise in the wider community. It is recognised that simply talking about problems is often a step towards improved mental well-being. In a male dominated industry this can be particularly difficult for some farmers, who may feel that they should not be the ones asking for help.

I have recently been attending the Six Steps to Loving Your Church course at St Michael's, which has just finished, and one of the points I took away was the importance that was placed on talking to one another either before or after church. It was suggested that this is a time when we can discuss the service and also listen to one another perhaps sharing our own issues to a trustworthy friend. Worrying is something that most of us tend to be very good at, and the stresses of modern living often help us to do this. Undoubtedly church should be recognised as a place where support is readily available.

Adam Grove Smith

SHARPEN YOUR AXE!

**“If the axe is dull, and one does not sharpen the edge, then he must use more strength; but wisdom brings success.”
(Ecclesiastes 10:10)**

When I was younger I used to take an axe and cut up firewood from the woods behind our house. The one thing I always did was sharpen my axe! A dull axe meant harder work chopping through fallen trees. The sharper the axe, the less effort, and energy required for the task. So I learned early on to sharpen my axe before venturing into the woods, and I saved myself a lot of time and energy. (Besides, I was a small kid, growing up, so I needed all the help I could get!)

I see a lesson here. How many of us are exerting so much energy for the Kingdom, but are working with dull axes? We need to sharpen our spiritual lives, get focused in prayer, and spend deep time in the Word. Then, when we are "out in the woods", working for the Kingdom our effectiveness will be greatly multiplied because our axes are sharp!

Don't get so busy that your axe becomes dull. Remember that your devotion to the Lord and His word will sharpen your spiritual life, especially before you start the day. Prioritize your devotional life and watch how your "edge" will cut through the problems, obstacles, and difficult situations, like a hot knife through butter!

Supplied from "The Worthy Brief" by Peter Schaad

CHURCH WEEKEND AWAY 2023 – KINGS PARK NORTHAMPTON

'A time for fun, fellowship and feeding!'

'When will we go back to *that place* mum?'. It is a question our children have asked me many times in the years following the previous weekend away in February 2020. They had had a *ball*, wallowing in the freedom afforded to them in the safety of Kings Park conference centre, with games and friends galore, children's activity sessions and a break from helicopter parents! Neither the months, years, nor national lockdowns since appeared to diminish their memories of it. Their excitement in learning we were returning in February 2023 was justified, as they enjoyed this weekend even more than the last.

From an adult perspective, the whole weekend felt like a privilege to attend. It was superbly organised from beginning to end and our rooms were clean and comfortable. We enjoyed fellowship with new friends, had the opportunity to get to know those from our own church on a deeper level, to share stories, laughter and to learn from Jennifer Bailey's 'Wordle' tips! As a working Mum, a break from feeding a family felt like a real luxury, but it was the spiritual feeding that was the *real* highlight of the weekend.

Indeed '*The Meaning of the Feeding*' was the focus of three of the sessions on the Saturday, as Alisdair Paine (Vicar of St. Andrew the Great, Cambridge) brought us fresh insight and a new perspective as he took us through John 6 and considered Jesus as the bread of life, as the food that ensures.

We had already enjoyed a presentation by Felsted School Chaplain Nigel Little, about Felsted's sister school in Uganda and the spiritual and educational work being done there. We were even gifted a sample of 'Safi coffee', whose profits go towards funding Ugandan children's education, to enjoy later.

The final session on Saturday was provided by Andy Robinson of 'Living Out', who spoke on 'Faith and Sexuality' and provided us with a multi-faceted perspective that was both gentle and challenging. We were reminded of the great dignity that Jesus placed on singleness and celibacy; on the solemn purpose of biblical marriage as a signpost to the divine union between Christ and the church, and of our shared need for an identity found first and foremostly on Christ, regardless of sexuality, role, or status.



A cross in the sky on the way home!

The weekend was spiritually and physically rejuvenating... what my mother would term 'a tonic!' (...and I haven't even mentioned the pool competition, circus skills and barn dancing!). I would encourage anyone to consider going to the next one and have no doubt you will find it as enjoyable, edifying and uplifting as we did.

Rachel Irvine

COFFEE CHAT WITH ROGER COOKE



Third Monday coffee and conversation

I shall be in the **Quadrant** cafe on **Monday 17th April** at 10.30am so if you'd like to join me you'd be very welcome!

Looking forward to seeing you.

Roger Cooke

CAN I PICK

YOUR BRAINS?

Jeff Clayton has compiled a survey about game shows and quizzes, and wants to hear what you like and think about quiz events.

Either [click here](#) or scan the QR code to go straight to the survey.



Over 15 years' experience running events, DBS checked and PAT tested.

Thank you in advance for your time and support.

« For any enquiries: jeffclaytonquiz@gmail.com »

Link to survey: <https://forms.office.com/r/e662H7GyLE>

BELFRY BULLETIN

The AGM of St. Michael's Braintree Guild of Church Bell Ringers was on Monday 1st March 2023 in Church House. There was a good attendance with most of the members present. Guild Master Bradley Hill welcomed all to the meeting especially Church Warden Lin Terris who he invited to open the meeting in prayer.

The minutes of the last AGM were accepted with no matters arising. The Officers reports were submitted and accepted.

MASTERS

Bradley reported great achievement with the Guild ringing 48 Quarter Peals since the completion of the Bell Refurbishment with 16 first's for Guild members. We rang for 19 special occasions including for the seating of the Bishop of Chelmsford, for Queen Elizabeth 11:- 70th anniversary of her Accession, Platinum Jubilee, Half muffled to commemorate her life, for the commemorative service and the Queens funeral service.

Bradley saw the coming year one as one of further achievements, including the 1st Peal on the bells since the refurbishment.

STEEPLE KEEPER

It was agreed to invite the Essex Associations Technical Advisor to make an inspection of the bells and the fittings it being 2 years since the completion of the refurbishment.

TREASURER

All outstanding accounts have been settled, which leaves us with a credit balance of £520.

We had the pleasure of electing 3 new members to the Guild, Rosie Gray, Jodie Hill and Sarah Blazeby were welcomed by Bradley.

Five serving Officers were re-elected unopposed...

MASTER	Bradley Hill.
DEPUTY MASTER	Debbie Hill.
SECRETARY	Lin Ould.
TREASURER	Richard Ould.
STEEPLE KEEPER	Bradley Hill

The meeting thanked them for their dedication during the past difficult years.

Our new DEPUTY STEEPLE KEEPER is Ellis Whitehouse.

Outings and Tours were discussed and it is hoped to have a 1-day outing and weekend away during the year.

The Bell Refurbishment Project has been completed, signed off and paid for. The Guild recorded a vote of thanks to the Master Bradley Hill for the efficient and thorough manner in which he project managed the whole operation. It was his decisive, organising ability and his infective enthusiasm that drove the project to its successful conclusion. THANKS BRAD.

Lin Terris closed the meeting with a prayer.

Post-meeting: the differing methods of ringing Tenor bells (the biggest and heaviest), and Treble bells (the smallest and lightest), discussion took place with Debbie telling Bradley that the tenor is the same as the treble only everything is bigger!!!

AWAY FROM THE TOWER

Ellis was at Coggeshall on 26th February to ring in a District Quarter Peal of Plain bob Minor.

While in Bristol on the weekend of 4th and 5th March, Debbie and Jodie enjoyed ringing at Coalpit Heath.

Peter went to Gamlingay to ring a QP of Humber Ferry Surprise Major with the Golden Oldies on 7th March.

Jodie rang a QP of Grandsire Triples on 15th March and on the 18th was in a band that won a striking completion scoring very good marks.

With his Tuesday band of Hand Bell ringers Bradley rang a QP of Plain Bob Minor on 21st March.

On Sunday 26th March Peter joined the Kelvedon Ringers to ring a QP in memoriam of Frederick Garwood Father of Kelvedon's Vicar.

Peter Smith

APRIL DIARY

www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk

Our YouTube services can be accessed through the “St Michael’s – Worship on the Web” YouTube channel and are generally updated during the week after the Sunday service

2 Sunday (Palm Sunday)

9.00am Next Plus Breakfast (14-18s)

10:00am Church Family Worship (with Baptism – Albert Gray)

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

6:30pm Evening Worship

3 Monday

9:30am SMASH Holiday Club (Church House)

7:30pm Bell Ringing

4 Tuesday

9:30am SMASH Holiday Club (Church House)

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

5 Wednesday

9:30am SMASH Holiday Club (Church House)

6 Thursday

10.00am Coffee@StMichael’s (in church)

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

8:00pm Maundy Thursday Communion

7 Friday (Good Friday)

10:00am United Service (St Michaels Church) – followed by a Walk of Witness to George Yard

3:00pm An hour by the Cross (Church)

9 Sunday

8:00am Holy Communion

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

10:00am Easter Family Praise

6:30pm Holy Communion

10 Monday

7:30pm Bell Ringing

11 Tuesday

8.00pm First Priority Prayer Meeting on Zoom

13 Thursday

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

16 Sunday

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

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

10:00am Holy Communion

6:30pm Evening Worship

17 Monday

10:30am Coffee Chat with Roger Cooke @Quadrant

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)

18 Tuesday

1:45 - 2:45pm Tiddlywinks

7.00pm Men@StMichael's meal at Toby Notley Cross

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

19 Wednesday

10:00am Meeting Point

7:30pm Hope Explored (Vicarage)

20 Thursday

6.30pm Women@StMichael's meal at Toby Carvery

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

23 Sunday

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

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

10:00am Morning Worship

6:30pm All-Age Tonight

24 Monday

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)

25 Tuesday

10:00am Living Without Worry (Church House)

1:45 - 2:45pm Tiddlywinks

7:30pm Congregational Meeting (Church)

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

26 Wednesday (LINK SUBMISSION DUE)

10.00am Meeting Point

7:30pm Hope Explored (Vicarage)

27 Thursday

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

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

30 Sunday

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

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

10:00am Holy Communion

6:30pm United Service (@Elim Church)