

The LINK digital

December 2022



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

PRINCE OF PEACE

Dear Friends,

As we prepare for Christmas this year, I hope you will have an opportunity to reflect on the words of the prophet Isaiah, who referred to the promised Messiah as **"Prince of Peace"** (Isaiah 9:6).

It is such an appropriate title for Jesus Christ, the Messiah who Isaiah looked forward to. Because Jesus came to earth, that first Christmas, primarily to offer us **peace with God**. As Paul wrote, *"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* (Romans 5:1). Jesus' death on the cross offers us the opportunity to be at peace with God.

God's love also calls us to seek **peace with one another**. *"If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all."* (Romans 12:18).

This Christmas, I believe we should also be praying for **peace in our world**. The tragedy of the war in Ukraine has shown us again the horror and sacrifice of war. We will be praying for a lasting and just peace in Ukraine.

We have a variety of services including our **"Join in Nativity"** (come dressed as part of the Nativity) and **Christingle** service – anyone would be welcome to these services, but they are particularly suitable for children & families. We have **"Carols by Candlelight"** and a **Midnight Communion** (from 11pm on Christmas Eve), as well as services at **8am & 10am** on Christmas Day. Details of our services are on the next page.

It would be great if you are able to join us, as we celebrate the birth of our Saviour Jesus. And please consider if there is anyone you could invite to come to a service.

Wishing you every blessing this Christmas time,

Nigel



We would be delighted to welcome you to
St Michael's Church, Braintree

Saturday 17 December

4pm Join in Nativity

Sunday 18 December

6.30pm Carols by Candlelight

Christmas Eve

4pm Christingle service

11pm Christmas Eve Communion

Christmas Day

8am Holy Communion

10am Family Celebration



@StMichaelsChurchBraintree



St. Michael's - Worship on the Web

www.stmichaelsbtreetree.co.uk

MISSION OF THE MONTH



Stand By Me have been rescuing children since 1995. They provide child-centred care as they consider the needs of each child, their family and their community.

The following points explain the work of Stand By Me in their own words...

Loving care

We get to know each child — their hopes, history, needs and dreams. We delight in our children and want the best for them. We invest our time, love and attention raising them to know that they're loved and accepted for who they are.

Strong families

Usually the best place for a child to thrive is in their family – that's why we work hard to help families stay together. In the absence of a stable family, we place children who are at risk into our loving family homes.

Great education

A great quality education is key to escaping poverty. Our education programmes equip our kids with the skills they need to rise above their circumstances and help change their communities.

Access to healthcare

The health of our children is vital to their development and happiness, so we go the extra mile to make sure that they are fit and well, and can enjoy their childhood.

A reason for hope

It's a privilege to teach our kids of Jesus' love for them, and to demonstrate this through the quality of our care. As their desire for spiritual answers grows, we encourage them to discover a love, respect and knowledge of God for themselves.

Caring relationships

It's incredibly important to each child's sense of value and stability that they're raised by parents and teachers who care about them. Child sponsorship supports this further by giving our kids a relationship with a sponsor who loves them and helps them feel part of a wider family.

Stand By Me has developed four care programmes to meet the individual needs of the children they work with. These programmes are Children's Homes, Schools, Care Centres and Family Support.

They are currently working in the following countries...Dominican Republic, Myanmar, Colombia, Romania, Ethiopia, India, Nepal and Kenya.

We continue to sponsor and support Tsion from Ethiopia through Stand By Me and we receive letters and updates.

If you would like to find out more about Stand By Me then do visit their website: <https://www.standby.me/>

Rachel Grove Smith - St Michael's rep for Stand By Me

A THOUGHT FROM THE PAST - Margaret St John-Coleman

Many in St Michael's will remember my late husband, Tom. Recently, when sorting through a miscellaneous collection of his papers, I came across a page torn from an old St Michael's parish magazine. It contained a short article by Tom, written in 1976.

At that time Tom was regularly travelling all around the British coast, seeking out suitable sites for locating radio transmitters for ship-to-shore radio communication. I knew from things he told me many years later that some of the locations were in the north of Scotland, including going out by helicopter to oil rigs. This piece must have been written after just such a visit, when the management had decided to give their visitor a guided tour of the whole installation! So here are Tom's reflections...



IN THE DEPTHS - A MOMENT TO PRAISE

The crew's piped rock-music jarred from wet concrete walls three feet thick. Sea water dripped from the rungs of the lower-stage access ladder down which I had just climbed. I was now a

good 100 miles north east of Peterhead, and 400 feet below the level of the North Sea.

I followed my safetyman guide on to the sea bed: pools of water on a surface of rough concrete. "See the chambers where the pipes come in - and leave again."

"I have never been anywhere like this in my life," I thought. "What shall I do? Why, of course, remember the Lord - like Jonah did" (*Jonah 2:7*).

"I praise Thee, Lord Jesus, Creator and Redeemer," I whispered once - and again. What an opportunity, to praise my Lord from the depths of the sea. But, oh, that I had been able to say it aloud, without fearing that my guides would think the depth experience had been too much...

I was probably not the first Christian to have descended the core of Total Oil's concrete pumping Platform MCP-01, on the sea road from far Frigg Field to the Scottish mainland, and to think like this. But perhaps I was the first whose daily Bible reading that very morning had included *Isaiah 51:10* with its reminder that it is really by the power of the arm of the Lord that man has *"dried the sea, the waters of the great deep"*.

T. J. St. John-Coleman

CHRISTMAS IS FOR CHILDREN

Tell that to the mother of boys two and under that Herod killed in Bethlehem! Luke tell us, in his gospel, that when Herod heard of the birth of a boy born in Bethlehem was to be king, he massacred all the boys under two. The first Christmas was not for children!

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS WAS FOR ALL

We don't know much about Mary the mother of our Lord. But one thing we are certain of is that she had 'a way with words'. She wrote a hymn or poem which Luke has written down for us in his gospel. Please have a look at *Luke 1:46-56*.

Everyone of the humble can be 'exalted' and the 'hungry fed'. The 'rich' as well as 'kings' can be brought down. And indeed will be. According to Mary, it is God's way to put things right. It is his pleasure to delight to reverse what wrong people have done. And this is for us all.

THE COST OF PUTTING THINGS RIGHT.

A mouse can cost a small fortune by eating through an electric cable in the loft so cutting off the light to the bedroom, leaving you groping for your dressing gown! 'How much will it cost to put right?' may be the question asked of the electrician.

The cost of putting our world right is beyond what we could pay. It meant that God himself had to become a genuine man. Jesus is the real God who, becoming a genuine human being, lived, died and rose again for us thus paying for the great damage we have done to ourselves.

Having ascended into heaven, he awaits God the Father's moment to return again. Then the great time that his mother spoke of will be established.

CHRISTMAS FOR EVERYBODY – YOUNG & OLD!

It is offered to us a moment to turn back God by Jesus Christ seeking his undeserved forgiveness and remaking so that, instead of being rejected as part of the messed-up world, we might belong to the new.

Happy Christmas!

Stephen Bailey

BELFRY BULLETIN

November was dominated in the tower by two events...

First and foremost, was for Remembrance Day and Half Muffles for the Civic Service of Remembrance. On the 11th day of the 11th month, we tolled the Tenor bell before and after the 2 minutes silence at 11 o'clock. Before the silence, the Tenor was tolled 104 times and 77 times after -these numbers reflect the number of years after the end of the First World War and the Second World War to the present day. Over the years, this has become our custom.

To welcome the Parade to the Civic service of Remembrance on Sunday 13th November, we rang a good Half Muffled Quarter Peal:

1344 changes of Plain Bob Major in 44mins

Treble David Learmonth, 2 Charles Cope, 3 Kath Downs, 4 Peter Smith, 5 Debbie Hill, 6 Maurice Downs, 7 Simon Ward, 8 Bradley Hill[c]

The footnote reads "wishing Lin Ould a speedy recovery Hip Hip Hooray". Lin has had a hip replacement operation!

Secondly, November is the Essex Association of change Ringers [EACR] Northern District Quarter Peal month when we try to ring a QP in all the District Towers, this was our contribution.

As I have mentioned in the Bulletin previously, Ellis is ready to ring a Quarter of Stedman Doubles, so for the Communion service on Sunday 20th November, we rang :-

1260 changes of Stedman Doubles in 44mins

Treble Jim Green, 2 Debbie Hill, 3 Ellis Whitehouse,

4 Peter Smith, 5 Bradley Hill[c], 6 David Newton.
1st in method for Ellis

On Sunday 6th November, we rang St Martins Bob Doubles, Plain Bob Doubles, rounds and Call Changes for the 10am Church Family Worship with Baptisms.

AWAY FROM THE TOWER

Most of our activities have been connected with the EACR Northern Districts Quarter Peal month, apart from Bradley who has been sailing round the Greek Islands "AGAIN"

Peter rang a QP of Uxbridge Surprise Major with the Golden Oldies

For Quarter Peal Month

5th November - Debbie rang a 3 Doubles method QP at Castle Heddinham and Peter rang Beverly Surprise minor at Great Bardfield

13th November - Peter rang Plain Bob Minor at Wethersfield

19th November - Peter rang 5 Doubles methods at Finchingfield and Ellis and Peter rang Cambridge Surprise Major at Toppesfield

20th November - Bradley and Peter range Plain Bob Doubles, with Bradley conducting, at Witham.

26th November - Ellis and Peter rang Plain bob Triples at Sible Heddington

27th November - Ellis and Peter rang 4 Doubles methods at
Black Notley and Peter rang 2 Doubles methods at Wethersfield

Peter Smith

HE GAVE HIS LIFE FOR HIS BROTHER

In January 2011 there were some terrible thunderstorms in Queensland, Australia. There was serious flooding. Donna Rice was driving with her sons Jordan (13) and Blake (10). Her car gets enclosed by some terrible flooding. Someone tries to help. Even though he first reaches Jordan to bring him into safety, the boy insisted that his little brother should be saved before him. Whilst Blake is being saved, Jordan and his mother are torn off the car roof and carried away by the flood. These two can only be pulled out of the water having died.

“Jordan died for his brother” declared the headlines. The youngster displayed a great deal of courage and selfless love for his brother by scarifying himself for him.

This sad story leads my thoughts to Jesus Christ, the good shepherd who gave His life for his sheep (John 10:11). He accepted God's justice on my behalf. He was crucified to bear the punishment for my sins. On the cross He cried out: “My God why have you forsaken me?” to which He did not receive an answer (Matthew 27:46). He gave His life to save me.

I took His saving hand and believed what He did for me on the cross. He freed me from my sins, the power of Satan and death. On top of this He gave me eternal life.

Translated by Peter Schaad from the Swiss Calendar

A VISIT BY PROF JEANNE McCARTHY FROM GEORGIA

Jonathan Wicks received a request from the above lady to see where Nicholas Udall's play, "Ralph Roister Doister", was performed. Udall or Woodall was vicar at St Michael's in 1530 and headmaster at Eton. The play is considered the first comedy play written in English. Jeanne is a professor of English studying Shakespeare from Georgia in the U.S.A. Her request was handed to me as I have an interest in the Reverend Udall.

After a trip round the church, we managed to get a visit to the Braintree Museum courtesy of Polly Redman and also saw the main council chamber in the Town Hall. One of the pictures on its walls shows the landing of the Reverend Hooker in the U.S.A. after he had escaped from the hands of Archbishop Laud. He then went on to found the City of Hartford Connecticut.

We then went to see where Jeanne had lived in the Avenue after she was born in 1956. Her father had been an American Colonel in the U.S.A.F. during the war flying Thunderbolts. The owner kindly showed us around.

We also saw the American Air Force window in the Catholic Church. After this, we did the history tour of Bradford Street including where the family of the second and sixth Presidents of the U.S.A. John Adams and John Quincy Adams stayed, namely Tabor House. This was rounded off with late lunch to end a busy day.

Written by Rod Davey

OASIS@ST MICHAEL'S



You are warmly invited to

Oasis@StMichael's

An informal Bereavement Support Group

Thursday 22nd December 2022

2pm until 3.30pm in St Michael's Church House (Small Hall),

St Michael's Lane, CM7 1EY

If you would like to know more, please contact:

**Jo Adams, Derek Chapman, Margaret Kinniburgh or Margaret St
John-Coleman**



Advent **SMASH** Club
for families

Saturday 10th December
3pm – 5pm
St Michaels Church

Join us for an afternoon
of fun family activities!
* Craft, Games & more...



St. Michael's Church

ADVENT CLUB NIGHTS

FOR THOSE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL AGE

Thursdays 7.30pm-9pm

1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd December

Featuring...

board games

table tennis

craft activities

festive food



Book online through the Church website
www.stmichaelsbtrees.co.uk

COFFEE CHAT WITH ROGER COOKE



Third Monday coffee and conversation

I shall be in the Quadrant cafe on **19th December** at **10.30am** so if you'd like to join me you'd be very welcome!

Looking forward to seeing you.

Roger Cooke

2023 WORK PARTY DATES

Sat 11 Feb – Winter tidy up, start redecorating of the next couple of rooms in church house (Counselling room and the Small hall would be priority)

Sat 1 April – Spring tidy and early garden tidy, complete one room of Church House.

Sat 29 April – Late spring garden tidy. Start next room of decoration of Church House.

Sat 3 June – Small Hall redecoration exploration.

Sat 22 July – Small Hall redecoration started properly.

Sat 2 Sept – Preparing buildings for Autumn return

Sat 21 Oct – Leaf drop gutter clearance and tidy out ahead of light party and electrical work (our 5 year electrical certificate is up at this point)

All of these include checking the Gutters/drainage on the Church!

Contact Dave Marriott for more details

DECEMBER 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

1 Thursday

10:00am Coffee@St Michael’s – in church

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

7:30pm Advent Club Night (for Secondary School Age)

3 Saturday

9:30am Men@St Michael’s – Christmas Cracker

4 Sunday

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

10:00am Church Family Worship (with Thanksgiving)

6:30pm Holy Communion

6 Tuesday

1:15pm Tiddlywinks

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth (resumes Jan 17th 2023)

7 Wednesday

10.00am Meeting Point (resumes Jan 11th 2023)

8 Thursday

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill, resumes Jan 12th 2023

7:30pm Advent Club Night (for Secondary School Age)

10 Saturday

3:00pm Advent SMASH Club Extra (for families)

11 Sunday

8:00am Holy Communion

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

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

10:00am Morning Worship

13 Tuesday

1:15pm Tiddlywinks

8.00pm First Priority Prayer Meeting

15 Thursday

7:30pm Advent Club Night (for Secondary School Age)

17 Saturday

4:00pm Join in Nativity

18 Sunday

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

10:00am Holy Communion

6:30pm Carols by "Candlelight"

19 Monday

10:30am Coffee Chat with Roger Cooke @Quadrant

20 Tuesday

1:15pm Tiddlywinks (resumes Jan 10th 2023)

22 Thursday (LINK SUBMISSION DUE)

2.00pm Oasis@StMichael's – an informal Bereavement Support Group (Small Hall in Church House)

7:30pm Advent Club Night (for Secondary School Age)

24 Saturday (Christmas Eve)

4:00pm Christingle Service

11:00pm Holy Communion

25 Sunday (Christmas Day)

8:00am Holy Communion

10:00am Christmas Day Family Service

26 Monday

7:30pm Bell Ringing – A Quarter Peal

1 Sunday (New Year Day)

10:00am Family Service