

The LINK

DECEMBER 2023



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



TRUE GREATNESS" – CHRISTMAS AT ST MICHAEL'S

Dear Friends,

This Christmas, we will be reflecting at St Michael's on the "True Greatness" shown, uniquely in Jesus Christ, that first Christmas.

We may measure greatness in terms of success or achievement, perhaps in our work or regarding our family or friends. But Jesus showed true greatness, not in his success, but in his humility.

John chapter 1 tells us how Jesus, the Word of God and the Son of God, was there at the beginning of everything ... at creation. Yet he chose to come into our world as a baby, to live among us ... eventually to die for us. He did this so that **"to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."** (John 1:12). In humility, Jesus gave up the glories of heaven. Yet his sacrifice gives us the hope of heaven. These are great truths that we will be reflecting on during the Christmas season.

We will be having many of our regular services and events over Christmas (see next page). We will also be having something new called **“Carols We Love”** – we will enjoy some traditional carols, have some seasonal refreshments and hear about the origins and meaning of “Hark the Herald Angels Sing”. It will be on Thursday 21st December, 10.00-11.30am in Church House. Do please join us if you are able to, and think about whether there is someone you could invite.

I do hope you will be able to join us over the Christmas season as we reflect on the greatest man that ever lived.

Wishing you every blessing,

Nigel



Christmas at St Michael's

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

Saturday 16 December
4pm Join in Nativity

Sunday 17 December
6.30pm Carols by 'Candlelight'

Thursday 21 December
10am "Carols we love"
(In Church House – the church hall)

Christmas Eve
10am Family Communion
4pm Christingle service
11pm Midnight Communion

Christmas Day
8.00am Holy Communion
10.00am Family Celebration

Sunday 31 December
10am Family Service

St Michaels Church presents
SMASH Extra
for Families
Advent Special



Saturday
9th December
3pm - 5pm

Join us for fun
Christmas themed
activities!

MISSION OF THE MONTH

ACTS



ACTS Ministry is based in Burkina Faso, one of the poorest countries in the world. The ministry under the leadership of Joanna Ilbouda focuses its efforts on providing education to orphans and other vulnerable children. Orphans and other vulnerable children who do not get support fall into destitution and are prone to exploitation.

In order to provide an education based on Christian principles, ACTS Ministry built a primary school, a secondary school and a professional training centre. While working in rural areas in the commune of Komsilga, which is a population strongly involved in Islam, ACTS Ministry has managed to bring the gospel to many orphans and widows and other vulnerable children who stand strong in their faith.

Adapted from the ACTS website

The role of St Michaels rep for ACTS is vacant. Please speak to Nigel Adams if you will be interested in the role or wish to know about what the role entails.

St Michael's rep (Vacant)

WHAT'S OUR ESTIMATE OF OURSELVES?

BARONESS HEATHER HALLET

We've almost got through 2023. We have come out the other side of Covid. We didn't do a bad job there! We are even confident enough to hold a public enquiry under Baroness Heather Hallet. She is looking at what the government did so that we will be better prepared for future pandemics.

THE GLORY OF HUMAN-KIND

Church Lane, Bocking, is the home of the expanding Braintree College. This is part of the Colchester Institute. It provides all kinds of training and education for all sorts of jobs and work. Teachers and students alike are people of ability and skill. On our doorstep we have a college that says that both sexes are capable of great things.

The Bible goes along with this. Men and women are made in the image of God. They are capable of great things. They master diseases with their colleges and institutes.

THEN WHY DO WE NEED CHRISTMAS?

If we can triumph over a pandemic, review how the government coped, then why do we need help from outside ourselves? Our nobility is not all that we can see about ourselves. If God were to have a human face, it would be etched with sorrow. Sadly, we capable men and women are infused with a power to swerve away from Him.

It could be put like this. Suppose it is true that when we die we are ushered into the presence of God. Just one glimpse of God would mean that we would turn around and rush out of his

presence as fast as our legs could carry us. His 'holiness' would make us run out of heaven.

HOME FOR CHRISTMAS? HOME FOREVER.

God knows that we would turn tail and run out of heaven. That is why he sent his Son to bring us back home. Christmas is the beginning of Our Lord's search for us and his appeal for us to come to Him and to come home. You and I are remarkable, but sadly flawed. We have amazing capabilities, but they don't fit us to live with God. Only our Lord Jesus, born in Bethlehem, is fit to live with our heavenly Father.

A happy Christmas and a God blessed new year!

Stephen Bailey

FARMING SEASONS

Well, this Autumn has not been an easy one for arable farmers. The storms which have been relentlessly hitting us from the Atlantic have provided an onslaught of wet and windy weather and since mid October our weather in Essex has been more like that of Northern Ireland! Drilling winter crops including wheat, oats and beans have all been tricky if not impossible because of the saturated soil, and any small windows of opportunity to get on the land could not afford to be missed. Perhaps the more worrying thing for all you consumers is that vegetable farmers growing potatoes, carrots and broccoli have been really struggling to harvest their crops, and there are reports of poor quality and low yields. Perhaps it might be a good idea to keep a look out for these, and the prices when you do your supermarket shop in December?



But let's not get all gloomy with the festive season around the corner. On the farm there is some good news to report in that we have purchased a new (second hand) sprayer to help us apply pesticides and liquid fertilizer. It is an altogether more sophisticated machine than the last one, which means that the sprayer links with the GPS (global positioning system) on the tractor ensuring that exactly the correct amounts of chemical are applied also ensuring there is no overlapping. This is good for saving on input costs, but also means there is nothing wasted which could otherwise get washed into the water courses making the way we farm more environmentally friendly.

Traditionally December is a quieter month on an arable farm, with many farmers looking to do workshop type jobs. This year, however, has been busy in scaring off one of our number one pests, pigeons! They have been attacking our oil seed rape in vast numbers this year and a large flock can do quite a bit of damage in just a few hours if left undisturbed. The idea of scaring them off your fields is they go and eat someone else's crop and not yours! I know it sounds like playing at Dick Dastardly, but the consequences can cause a crop to be destroyed. I am not entirely sure why the pigeon problem is bad, but apparently their other sources of food such as acorns could be in short supply this year.

This is the last farming article of the year and farming like many industries is facing an uncertain future as we head towards the new year. The government is looking to make changes in the way they support and encourage our farmers, which also means reducing the financial support they provide. I think it's fair to say that some farmers may find life more difficult in the future. Saying that I still think that for me, being born into a farming family, has been an enormous privilege and opportunity.

Finally, I would like to wish all the readers a Happy Christmas and when you tuck into your Christmas lunches don't think of the farmers, but the real provider of the feast!

Adam Grove Smith

ECO CHURCH: UPDATE ON CHAIN FOUNDATION UGANDA

At St Michael's Church, we are honoured to count Chain Foundation Uganda as one of our Mission Partners. In fact our association with Chain Foundation dates back many years - it is a blessing to be able to support this ministry in Africa, as they serve the vulnerable children and the community as a whole. One of the many activities that the ministry undertake is farming - crop and animal farming have served as vehicles for feeding the community (produce such as food and milk are consumed by the children) as well as making the children and locals learn better farming practices. Another aspect of the farming activity is Bee Keeping - children have been able to get honey which is necessary in the treatment of cough and other related illnesses. Children also learn the act of bee keeping as part of their introduction to farming practices. As part of our ongoing support, we will like to invite you to include this area of Chain Foundation's work in your pray. Thank you.



Inspection taking place



"Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" Luke 10:2

On behalf of the Eco-church group



St Michael's Church Braintree

Women @ St Michael's invite you to

**A Sparkling Christmas Evening on Friday December
8th 2023 in St Michael's School Hall from 7.00-9.30**

- Relax and enjoy seasonal refreshments
 - Christmas Music
 -
- Learn and perform a new Carol with Jonathan and Estelle Wicks
 - Drama to learn and perform with Rachel Grove Smith
- Table decoration with Cynthia Daniels and Lionel Clark
 - Christmas Origami with Rachel Huxter
- Reindeers and Gift boxes to make with Lin Terris and June Kirk
 - Taste and rate the best mince pies on sale in Braintree
- **An evening not to be missed ... Come and bring a friend**
 - Suitable for Year 6 to 90 plus years!
- **Cost £5 for Adults £3 for school and College Students. Sign up in St Michael's Church or e mail Jennifer.bailey42@tiscali.co.uk**
 - Pay on the night.



DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR



2024 Work Party Dates

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 10 Feb | Winter tidy up and decorating. |
| 16 March | Spring tidy and early garden tidy. |
| 27 April | Late spring garden tidy. |
| 8 June | Small Hall redecoration exploration. |
| 20 July | Small Hall redecoration started properly. |
| 8 Sept | Preparing buildings for Autumn return. |
| 19 Oct | Leaf drop gutter clearance and tidy out . |

All days start at 9am and will run until mid-afternoon/work completion.



Lunch and snacks will be provided as appropriate.

Tasks may change due to weather and need.

Please let either Warden know if you are coming.

COFFEE CHAT WITH ROGER COOKE



Third Monday coffee and conversation

I shall be in the Quadrant cafe on **Monday 18th December** at 10.30am so if you'd like to join me you'd be very welcome!

Looking forward to seeing you.

Roger Cooke

The newspaper cutting below is from Margaret St John-Coleman, of a sermon by Rev Frank Trundley (Vicar 60 years ago)! He was preaching on the 25th Sunday after Trinity, which has this collect,

*Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of thee be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

DAILY MIRROR, Monday, November 25, 1963 PAGE 7

THE VICAR CAUSES A STIR



He quotes the Bible as he mixes puddings for Christmas

THE congregation watched intently as the vicar climbed into the pulpit, opened the Book of Common Prayer . . . and began to mix his Christmas puddings.

Yesterday was "Stir-up Sunday" at St. Michael's Church, Braintree, Essex—the Sunday that the Rev. Frank Trundley, pictured left, makes his puddings in full view of parishioners attending morning service.

Guests

Next to the prayer book stood a cookery book, a mixing bowl, wooden spoon, scales and enough ingredients to make three Christmas puddings.

As he added the ingredients he quoted the appropriate Biblical collect, beginning with the words "Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord. . . ."

Then the bowl was taken up and down the aisle for members of the congregation to have a stir.

Mr. Trundley said: "We will use the puddings in the vicarage on Christmas Day. We usually manage to polish them off because of the number of guests we have."

Picture by Mirror cameraman GEORGE GREENWELL

GET DRENCHED!

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39)

A few days ago, they had to shut down the Rainbow Bridge between the U.S. and Canada at Niagara Falls because of a vehicle explosion that occurred at the border crossing.

If you've never visited Niagara Falls, you're in for a truly amazing experience! Years ago, during my first visit, I was awestruck by its enormity. It's mind-blowing to think that every second about one-hundred and fifty thousand tons of water plunges down. The sheer marvel of Niagara Falls attracts nearly 12 million tourists each year.

The Lord could have used a lot less water. He could have made the Falls smaller, but instead, He created them as high as a twenty-story building -- but would you believe that as much water as pours down from those Falls, that amount doesn't even compare to the amount of love that God has poured out upon us?

God's love toward us is not like a little water from the tap. It is not as high as a twenty-story building -- it's not as high as a fifty story building! His love far surpasses that! We can't help but be drenched!

In James it says, "Draw near to me, and I'll draw near to you" ... let's spend our Shabbat drawing near to Him ... and simply be drenched in His unending love this weekend!

Supplied from "The Worthy Brief" by Peter Schaad

BELFRY BULLETIN

Recently 3 Quarter Peals and one failed attempt have been rung , there has been 1 visiting group and an association training day along with our usual service and practice nights.

On Saturday 28th October 2023 a group of Northern District ringers assembled and rang a Quarter Peal of Little Bob Royal in 48 minutes Treble Lin Ould, 2 Debbie Hill, 3 Vicky LeFevre, 4 Pat Cresshull, 5 Jim Green, 6 Peter Smith, 7 David Newton, 8 Simon Ward, 9 Ian Cresshull, 10 Bradley Hill [c].

This was 1st blows in the method for Lin, Debbie, Jim, David, Simon and Bradley, 1st in method for Peter, 1st as conductor in method for Bradley and it was 1st QP on 10 bells for David. To get 9 1sts in one QP is unusual and a memorable achievement.

The next day for the 10am service we attempted a QP of Cambridge Surprise Minor which fell apart very near the end of its completion. What a pity.

The following Sunday, again for the 10am service, we rang a QP of St Clements College Bob Minor, 1260 changes in 40mins, Treble Lin Ould, 2 Simon Ward, 3 Jim Green, 4 Peter Smith, 5 Ellis Whitehouse, very expertly conducted by 6 Debbie Hill [c], this was also for Quarter Peal Month.

Quarter Peal Month is when the ringers of the Northern District of the Essex Association of Change Ringers try to ring a QP in as many Northern District towers as they can.

Remembrance Day Saturday 11th November 2023. Richard Ould tolled the Tenor bell from 10.50am until 11am the years since the end of the 1st World War. At 1104am Peter Smith Tolled the Tenor

78 times denoting the number of years from the end of the 2nd World War.

Prior to the Civic Service of Remembrance on Sunday 12th November we rang a Half Muffled QP of 1380 changes of Plain Bob Minor in 49mins. Treble Lin Ould, 2 Jim Green, 3Debbie Hill, 4 Peter Smith, 5 David Learmonth, Simon Ward[c] also for QP month.

The ringers from the Thorley area of Hertfordshire were the visitors on Saturday 18th November and they enjoyed ringing our bells with many complements on the bells and the comfortable ringing chamber.

For our practice night on 20th November the simulator was used. This means the the sound of the bells is heard through a computer in the ringing room but the bells cannot be heard outside the Tower

The simulator was used again for the Essex Association's striking training day on Saturday 25th November from 11am until 4pm with a break for lunch. The simulator, the go of the bells and the comfort of the ringing room helped to make this a successful event.

AWAY FROM THE TOWER

On 31st October Peter Smith joined the Golden Oldies to ring 2 QP's, 1 of Yorkshire Surprise Major and the Other Ashstead Surprise Major at Debbenham.

On All Saints Day Peter rang with Great Bardfield band to ring All Saints Place Doubles to a Quarter Peal for Quarter Peal month

Debbie Hill conducted a Handbell QP on 7th November of St Clements College Bob Minor. Debbie's 1st as conductor or handball Quarter , this was for QP month.

For Remembrance Sunday Peter rang in a QP of Kent Treble Place Triples, this was 1st blows in the method for all the band, for QP month.

Bradley Hill has been sailing AGAIN only this time he achieved his Open Water Masters Qualification. Round the world next?

Ellis Whitehouse and Peter Smith went to Black Notley where Ellis conducted a QP of Plain Bob Double on the 5 bells for QP month.

For the 6pm evening service at Witham Ellis Whitehouse and Peter Smith rang in a Quarter Peal of Grandsire Triples another for QP month.

Peter Smith

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

3 Sunday

10:00am Church Family Worship – Fishermen’s Mission

12noon Lunch in Church House

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

6:30pm Evening Worship

4 Monday

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)

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

5 Tuesday

1:15 – 2:45pm Tiddlywinks

6 Wednesday

10:00am Meeting Point

7 Thursday

7:00pm Club Night for Secondary School kids (Church House)

8 Friday

7–9:30pm A Sparkling Christmas Evening (@St Michaels School Hall)

9 Saturday

9.30am Christmas card deliveries on new estates

3–5pm ‘SMASH Extra’ – Advent Special (in Church)

10 Sunday

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

10:00am Morning Worship

6:30pm Holy Communion

11 Monday

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)

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

12 Tuesday

1:15 - 2:45pm Tiddlywinks

8.00-9.00pm First Priority Prayer Meeting

13 Wednesday

10:00am Meeting Point (Last for 2023; resume Jan 10th)

14 Thursday

7:00pm Club Night for Secondary School kids (Church House)

16 Saturday

4:00pm Join in Nativity

17 Sunday

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

10:00am Holy Communion

6:30pm Carols by "Candlelight"

18 Monday

10:30am Coffee Chat with Roger Cooke @Quadrant

7:30pm Bell Ringing

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

19 Tuesday

1:15 - 2:45pm Tiddlywinks (Last for 2023; resume Jan 9th)

21 Thursday

10:00am "Carols We Love" (In Church House – the church hall)

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

7:00pm Club Night for Secondary School kids (Church House)

24 Sunday

10:00am Family Communion

4:00pm Christingle Service

11:00pm Midnight Communion

25 Monday

8:00am Holy Communion

10:00am Christmas Day Family Service

31 Sunday (LINK SUBMISSION DUE)

10:00am Family Service

