

FEBRUARY 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

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01939 235343
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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 FEBRUARY					
DAY	DATE	SEASON	WEM	WESTON	LEE
SUNDAY	2nd	CANDLEMAS	08:00 HE 09:45 HE	09:30 HE	11:15 HE
THURSDAY	6th		09:30 HE		
SUNDAY	9th	4th SUNDAY before LENT	08:00 HE 09:45 HE	09:30 HE	11:15 HE
THURSDAY	13th		09:30 HE		
SUNDAY	16th	3rd SUNDAY before LENT	08:00 HE 09:45 HE	09:30 MP	11:15 HE
THURSDAY	20th		09:30 HE		
SUNDAY	23rd	2nd SUNDAY before LENT	08:00 HE 09:45 HE 17:00 P&P	11:00 HE	11:15 MP
THURSDAY	27th		09:30 HE		
HE—Holy Eucharist MP—Morning Prayer P&P—Praise & Prayer					





Notes from the Editor

FEBRUARY 2025



Dear Readers,

"A Happy New Year" to you all albeit a little late coming!

Well, Christmas has come and gone, all that preparation and everything over in the blink of an eye. Having had serious amounts of rain and then fog over the Christmas week we have now had the big freeze. Our weather certainly keeps us guessing. Hopefully we will soon be seeing

signs of spring in our gardens and in the surrounding countryside. I was delighted to see that daffodils are poking through the ground so soon after Christmas and despite the heavy frost they continue to increase in size. The rest of my garden is not looking so good and I will have to spend a lot of time working in it as soon as the weather improves.

As the weeks begin to fly by we are starting to think about Lent and then Easter. The supermarkets will be well ahead of us although I have not actually seen an Easter Egg yet.

Something else to think about in the Church's year is the preparation of new Electoral Rolls and the Annual Parish Council Meetings, not to forget getting the Accounts ready for the PCC to approve before they are presented at the APCM.

As we did not have a magazine in January there are 4 articles from the Diocese this month and a bumper contribution from Tricia Bamford.

Best wishes from your Editorial Team

Phoebe

Rector's Ramblings

Symbolism in a Church Service

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

For the next couple of "Rector's Ramblings", I thought I would talk a little about the Symbolism in a Church Service as I see it.

I have subtitled these articles as *What we do in a Church Service and why we do it* because, it is my hope that by the end of these articles you will have a deeper understanding of *What we do and why we do it*.

We all learn in different ways. Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic. That is by seeing, hearing or doing.

A quick way to see what sort of learner you are, is to imagine that you are putting your key into the front door and then unlocking it. Which side of the door is the lock? Try it now.

If you 'saw' where the lock is, you respond visually. And are most likely a visual learner

If you 'heard' the lock, you learn best by hearing and are an auditory learner

If you imagined putting your hand up to the door, then you are a kinaesthetic learner

Most people are a combination of all three styles, but with a predisposition towards one of them.

This is important because most of a Church service is auditory. One listens to the words and sings the hymns. But if you look around, there is loads going on visually and there are lots of movements. All of which mean something. Of course, all this was a lot more important before most people could read. At that time, they understood what was happening by the signs and symbols all around them. Often the only person who could read was the priest.

Unfortunately, it is my experience that often these signs and symbols are not explained to the people going to Church and I have been asked why we do *this or that*. For instance, why does the Vicar dress the way she or he does? Why do the coverings on the Altar, or Holy Table, change colour? What is the significance of that big candle? Why does the priest wave their hands over the bread and wine? And many other questions.

So, to begin with clothing.

Why do I wear Black?

Because I am a goth? No.

Simplicity.

Black is a symbol of Death. St Benedict in the 4th Century instructed his monks that every day you put on the black habit you remember your death, because someday it will be last day you are on this planet. Thus, the idea is to live this day in such a way that if you were to die today you would be ready to go to heaven.

Why are the collars white strips around the neck. Well, back in the day, it was like a collar that a university lecturer would wear. And it so happened that a lot of university lecturers were priests. So, priests started to wear what has become known as a clerical collar. In the collar there is a little piece of white. This is meant to be a sign or a reminder of a call to purity.

So that is a start with the clothing that an Anglo Catholic Priest would often wear about town.

Within a service there are other garments that the priest wears:

The Alb from *albus* (Latin for white). A reminder of our Baptism. Washed clean with the blood of the lamb (Revelation 7:14) hence white. Also, we are clothed with Christ.

The Cincture – belt. A white rope belt worn over the alb. A prayer is said when this is put on “Gird me, O Lord, with the cincture of purity, that the virtue of consistence may abide in me”.

The Stole – a scarf like garment that is the symbol of ordination. Worn in various colours that reflect the Church Seasons.

The Chasuble – A symbol of Christ’s love covering all the people.

In preparation for the Service as these vestments are put on prayers may be said. Such as:

While washing hands:

Give strength to my hands, Lord, to wipe away all stain, so that I may be able to serve Thee in purity of mind and body.

While putting on the Alb:

Purify me, Lord, and cleanse my heart so that, washed in the Blood of the Lamb, I may enjoy eternal bliss.



THE ALB

As the Cincture is tied:

Lord, gird me with the cincture of purity and extinguish my fleshly desires, that the virtue of continence may abide within me.



THE STOLE

Putting on the Stole:

Lord, restore the stole of immortality, unworthy as I am to approach your sacred mysteries, may I yet gain eternal joy.



THE CINCTURE

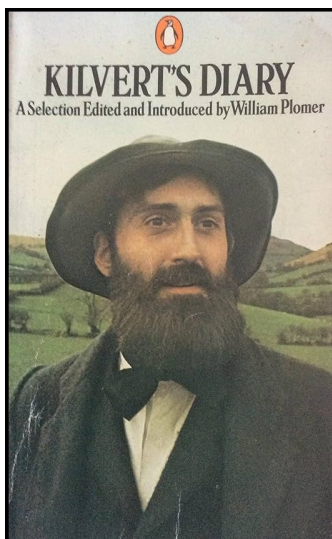
Putting on the Chasuble:

O Lord, who has said, 'My yoke is sweet and My burden light,' grant that I may so carry it as to merit Your grace.

*Yours in Christ,
Reverend John.*



THE CHASUBLE



Canon William Has Kept Us Wonderfully Entertained With Insights Into Ministry In The 1870's Through His Extracts From Kilvert's Diary.

His Comments On Those Extracts Have Helped Us Appreciate The Difficulties And Differences Of Ministry At That Time, And The Hard Living Conditions Of Parishioners, Particularly Those In Rural Areas. We Thank Him Very Much For His Contribution To The Magazine.

As Revd Francis Kilvert's 'Escapades' Come To An End, William Hopes To Continue To Contribute In Another Way.

So Watch This Space And Be Patient!

Notes from The Diocese for January 2025



Weirdly Christian



Arun Kataria

Twice in the last month I've heard it said that we shouldn't abandon the 'weirdness' of being Christian. If that means not holding an overly rational faith that leaves out the more miraculous and less explicable bits, I'll go with that.

'Mystery' and 'Christian' are words that go together easily and if 'weirdness' is a more modern way of expressing 'mystery' and it connects us with a different group of people, then I'll go with that too.

Some elements of the Christian story are easily described as weird. We've just heard the age-old story of Christmas and gone again in our hearts and minds to that hillside in Bethlehem. It's so traditional that we maybe no longer hear the weirdness of it.

The fact is that God's plan for communicating the story of salvation, the appearance of the angels to shepherds on that hillside is undoubtedly a weird way of announcing the most important event in history: the birth of Jesus in a stable, itself weird.

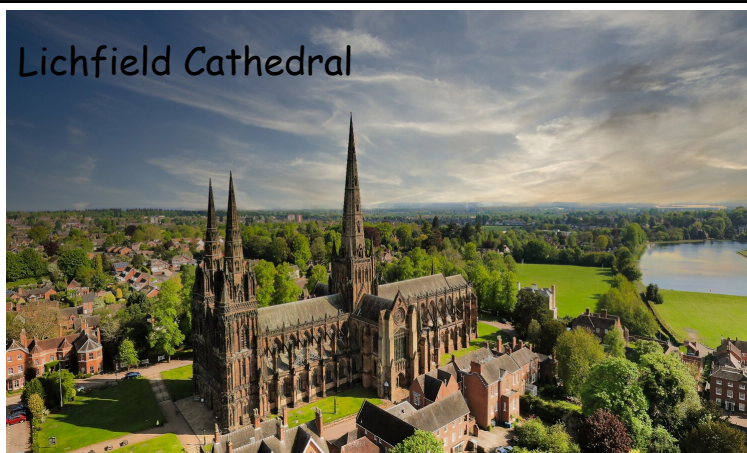
It's a story that is still being told 2000 years later. As a communications professional, I can't help marvelling at the choice of the shepherds to be the first to hear. Somehow, they made sure that they were not the last!

We know that the Christmas story is one that people react to, get their children involved in and which people are still reasonably familiar with even now, in supposedly secular Britain. In recent years in Britain over 80% of children have taken part in a nativity – even during the pandemic. That’s in a country where church attendance is around 5% of the population. That’s an effective communications strategy!

In the coming weeks and months, Lichfield Diocese will be rolling its diocesan strategy, including a communications plan. It’s my responsibility to formulate it, drawing on wisdom and experience from many quarters and much help from excellent colleagues. If any of it looks odd to you, just comfort yourself that it’s just me trying to be true to being weirdly Christian.

Back to the hillside in Bethlehem. At its heart, God was trusting us. Trusting the shepherds, no education, no standing. He was trusting them to report what they saw. They were witnesses. He trusts us with his message too, asking us to be witnesses too of what we know of God’s love and salvation.

*Arun Kataria is Lichfield Diocese’s Director of Communications.
Communicate with him via arun.kataria@lichfield.anglican.org.
He loves to hear good news stories from the parishes, chaplaincies,
schools and fresh expressions around the diocese.*



Notes from The Diocese for February 2025



A Brewing Sense Of Purpose



Jeanette Hartwell

I searched the internet for the word 'vocation'. The first result was Vocation Brewery (other breweries are available!) It's a business that I had never heard of but it immediately piqued my interest as I have been known to sample a few real ales in my time: in particular, the company's tag line - *Craftsmanship, Innovation & Patience Combine to Create Masterpieces*. Further intrigued, I then discovered that the brewery came into being when its founder 'left his job to follow his calling – to brew the big, flavourful beers he loves'.

Vocation is a word used often to describe a call for those who work in what we might describe as the caring professions – medicine and teaching amongst them, and in the church we use it often for those who follow a call to ordination. At its heart though, vocation is doing the thing that God wants us to do, which brings us joy and means that we might have something of life in all its fullness (John 10:10). In my work in supporting lay and ordained vocations I often describe it as the divine niggles, the thing that you just can't let go of, however much you might try.

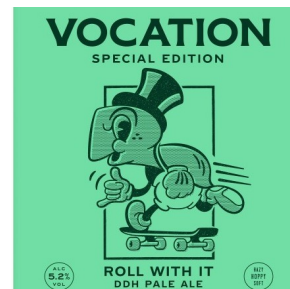
I don't know if the founder of Vocation Brewery has a faith, but it seems he understands vocation. In the Christian tradition the

Craftsmanship that we have is given to us by God as a gift and honed and shaped by learning and practice as we develop. Being open to the ways that God might be working in our lives and the lives of others brings about new ways of seeing the world and new ways of being (innovation), and patience means that we work at God's pace rather than our own, which can at times be hugely frustrating! These things combined mean that we might become or create 'masterpieces' within our own spheres of work, whether within the church or beyond. Each of us has a vocation, and our vocations are used in God's service and for the good of our communities. Again, perhaps the website sums it up well: in the 'About us' section there is a tale of overcoming obstacles to create the business, and the final sentence reads 'we pride ourselves on working together with shared purpose, on shared triumphs over adversities, born out of a love of what we do'.

There is real joy in doing what we love and so often people think that God is going to ask us to do the thing that we really dread or feel totally unqualified to do. It can take a huge leap of faith to follow a call and fulfil our vocation. One of the great joys of my role is seeing people grow and flourish in their vocations so if you or someone you know has a divine niggles then be encouraged and encourage one another – who knows where it might lead!

*Revd Preb Jeanette Hartwell leads Lichfield Diocese's
Vocations & Training Team.*

Contact her at jeanette.hartwell@lichfield.anglican.org or
visit her team's website at lichfield.anglican.org/vocations-and-training.





A Song for Winter

January can feel like a cold and grey month so it is very cheering to see a flash of colour and hear a little

birdsong. During the winter most birds do not sing, instead making simple calls, one or two syllables which are contact calls, allowing them to keep in touch with others within a flock, whilst they move around, foraging for food. Longer and more melodic songs are generally heard in spring when male birds are using song to communicate that they are present and are holding a breeding territory. These territories will contain nesting places such as trees or shrubs as well as sources of food and male birds proclaim this by song, deterring rivals and attracting females. The Robin however has a proper winter song as it holds a territory over the winter. Robins are not in pairs during the winter so both males and females sing and hold separate territories. These territories are giving them winter shelter and food and they will defend them fiercely, flying at intruders as well as singing.

In winter many Robins migrate from further north into the UK, flying in from Scandinavia, Russia, Poland and elsewhere. This also explains why we seem to see more Robins in the winter as our own summer Robins remain here all year round so numbers increase. The Robin's song is tuneful and a little melancholy but the reality of Robin life is harsher with an average lifespan of only 9 months. Many do

not survive the winter so holding and defending a territory containing good sources food and shelter is vital. The combination of a churchyard with mature, sheltering trees, plentiful berries, seeds and insects as well as soil invertebrates such as worms make them attractive to Robins. Churchyards tend to be rich in insect and other invertebrate life as no chemicals are used within them and the soils have been developing over decades or centuries, full of life. Churchyards are also usually surrounded by gardens so natural food may well be being topped up with mealworms, bird seed and fat balls too.

Why not look for Robins in your local churchyard or cemetery and listen for their winter song, you might like to put up some open-fronted nest boxes for them too, on churchyard trees and within gardens as well. Please let us know if you see or hear a Robin in your churchyard, use the iNaturalist app and photograph it if it will stay still long enough or else record its song, a biological record can be made either way.





Harriet Carty

Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor,

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The Wonderful World of Lichens

Churchyards are the ideal place for a lichen enthusiast to while away many happy hours. Lichens can be found on walls, monuments, trees and, if you have ancient grassland there may be lichens within the sward as well.

To the uninitiated lichens can look broadly similar with subtle mosaics of colour, often greys and yellows forming expanding circles as they increase in size as the years go by. There is more to lichens than meets the eye however. Firstly they are two or more organisms living together as one, usually a fungus and an algae. Fungus forms the visible part of the lichen and within, protected by threads of the fungus, are cells of algae and/or cyanobacteria which photosynthesise. So the fungus provides a home and the algae provides food. Lichens reproduce through microscopic fungal spores which, if they find a suitable partner, can colonise surfaces which are not too shaded or too smooth. These spores are released from structures which look rather like tiny jam tarts, flasks or pimples!

Lichens are fantastic at surviving where other life cannot. Provided there is enough light and moisture lichens are able to grow on bare stone, not needing cracks or soil to root into. Some lichens grow very slowly, perhaps half a millimetre per year whilst others grow more quickly. Many lichens are long-lived so the lichen you see in a churchyard may be almost as old as the wall or gravestone it is growing on.

Astonishingly there are over 2,000 different lichen species and it is not unusual for a single churchyard to contain more than 100 different types.

Churchyards are particularly rich in lichens as they contain so many old stones with a variety of types; limestone, sandstone, granite to name a few. Some stones are smoother, others rough and they may have differing amounts of shade, wind and moisture depending on where they are within the churchyard, which side of the monument the lichen is on, whether they are vertical, leaning or flat. The carving of the inscription itself provides microclimates with different amounts of light and moisture within the lettering. All of these changes in conditions will suit different lichen species. They are also found on trees, wooden fences and gates, grassy areas, pathways and even dustbin lids!

Most lichens offer protection to the surface they grow on and it may be easier to read lettering which is lichen-covered rather than bare, eroding stone. They do not need much care but do avoid the use of any chemicals near to lichens and definitely don't try and remove them. Lichens can die if shaded out so try and keep ivy or other climbers from encroaching over them too.

If you have never taken a closer look at a lichen then why not take a hand-lens or magnifying glass and give it a go. Lichen colonies have been described as minute, self-maintaining gardens, providing a natural cladding for the stone. They are beautiful and endlessly fascinating and if you like a challenge, why not look up the British Lichen Society website and find out more about how to identify them. —————→





Photograph by
Caring for God's
Acre,
Hope Bagot in
Shropshire



Photographs by Frank Dobson

Harriet Carty, Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor,
harriet@cfga.org.uk, www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk

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 members discount on all CfGA materials.

Use the discount code diomem22



COUNTRYSIDE MATTERS — February 2025

from ROGER ASHTON

Animal Behaviour

Everyone enjoys leisure time, observing animals, whether they are domestic or wild, out in the countryside or at a zoo. Of course domestic means any animal looked after or cared for by man so that could extend from the single household pet to the large farm with hundreds of cattle or even thousands of sheep or pigs.



In a farm environment where animals are your livelihood the observation of their behaviour is very important because the sooner you pick up signs of abnormality the better it will be for the animal's health and the farmer's bank balance!

Prevention is much more cost effective than cure and a quick return to full health saves the animal suffering, further discomfort and pain. The art of stockmanship is as relevant now as it ever was and, for all you budding herdsmen, a period of 5 to 10 minutes every day just watching your animal behaviour will be time well spent. Cattle, and in particular dairy cows, have been part of my life for sixty five years; you get to know the way they think and that is slowly; so give them some time (ten seconds to our one second) and they will work out what you want them to do, the secret is to keep them calm, if you do not you will scramble their brain, the adrenalin and stress load takes over and they become totally confused.

People who enjoy walking in the countryside will no doubt have encountered a group of excitable cattle, usually younger ones, they are not being aggressive only expressing their natural curiosity and relieving the boredom of their life at pasture. Stay calm and talk to them calmly, it is not what you say, a load of gibberish will do, but how you say it. Naturally motherhood brings a protective instinct and care is needed if you are in the vicinity of cows with calves, particularly if the family pet dog is with you. Cows distinguish strangers from people they know and see on a regular basis and very occasionally I have entered a loose box to identify the sex of a newborn calf and the mother cow, who knows me well, will bob her head which is a clear warning that she might charge me; a hasty retreat is the sensible thing to do! It has been known for a mature heifer who has been seriously upset to turn mad and become much more dangerous than a raging bull.

Cattle are no different to the pet dog in terms of what they think they can get away with, sometimes they can try the patience of a saint and a regular disciplined routine works wonders, they are much happier under those circumstances, just like the pet dog who will always try it on to test our weaknesses. Animals have a pecking order, just like chickens, think of dog packs. Cattle are the same, there is an established hierarchy and if you move some into a new group there is a major sort out for a few days with some considerable bullying. It is amazing how clever animals can be where food is concerned. They can devise all sorts of devious methods to access something "greener on the other side". One particular cow would find a dip in the ground where the electric fence was high and literally crawled under, we put a head harness on her, fitted a two foot wire aerial but she soon found that if she twisted her head and made the wire horizontal she would not get a shock!

Cattle have very sensitive hearing and smell, a milking unit dropping off in the parlour onto a metal checker plate makes quite a noise and cows 50 metres away at the far end of the collecting yard will hear it and go into alarm mode, wary that something is going on that disturbs them. Out in the fields a herd in alarm mode will bunch together in a tight circle as a self protective action. Have you ever seen grazing animals suddenly move to the shelter of a high hedge five minutes before a heavy squall of rain? I am sure a combination of smell, hearing and sight tells them, long before we humans would sense anything coming.



Finally I must mention cattle behaviour when spooked by the warble fly, the warbling noise tells them that a biting fly is after them and you will see cattle chasing about with their tails high trying to evade them. I once got spooked myself coming home on my bicycle from the neighbouring farm on an eerie moonlit night, where as a 10 year old I had been watching a western on television; a cow suddenly put her silhouetted head over a gap in the hedge as I approached. Wow! Did I hightail it for home!

The world's religions have a great respect for wild and domesticated animals, particularly the Eastern ones; they are treated almost like Gods there, and our interaction with them is good for our spirit. Long may it be so.

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

All of us complain that we haven't enough time.



It is because we look at our lives from too human a point of view. There's always time to do what God wants us to do, but we must put ourselves completely into each moment that He offers us.

Ephesians 5:15-17

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

I went out, Lord.
People were coming out.
They were coming and going,
Walking and running.
Everything was rushing; cars, lorries, the street, the whole town.
People were rushing not to waste time.
They were rushing after time, to catch up with time, to gain time.

Good bye, sir, excuse me, I haven't time.
I'll come back, I can't wait, I haven't time.
I must end this letter—I haven't time.
I'd love to help you, but I haven't time.
I can't accept, having no time.
I can't think, I can't read, I'm swamped, I haven't time.
I'd like to pray, but I haven't time.
You understand, Lord, they simply haven't the time.

The child is playing, he hasn't the time right now... Later on...
The schoolboy has his homework to do, he hasn't the time...
Later on...
The student has her courses, and so much work, she hasn't time...
Later on...
The young man is at his sports, he hasn't time... Later on...
The young married have their new house, they have to fix it up,
they don't have time... Later on...
The grandparents have their grandchildren, they haven't time...
Later on...
They are ill, they have their treatments, they haven't time...
Later on...
They are dying, they have no...
Too late! ... They have no more time!

And so we all run after time, Lord.
We pass through life running—hurried, jostled, overburdened,
frantic, and we never get there. We haven't time.
In spite of all our efforts we're still short of time,
a great deal of time.
Lord, you must have made a mistake in your calculations.
There's a big mistake somewhere.
The hours are too short,
The days are too short,
Our lives are too short.

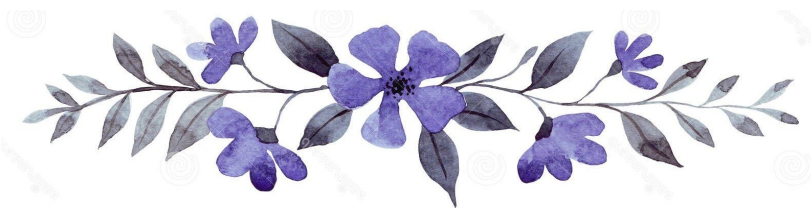
You are beyond time, Lord, you smile to see us fighting it
And you know what you are doing.
You make no mistakes in your distribution of time to us.
You give each one time to do what you want us to do.



But we must not lose time
 waste time,
 kill time,
For time is a gift that you give us,
But a perishable gift,
A gift that does not keep.
Lord, I have time,
I have plenty of time,
All the time you give me,
The years of my life,
The days of my years,
The hours of my days,
They are all mine,
Mine to fill, quietly, calmly,
But to fill completely, up to the brim,
To offer them to you, that of their insipid water
You may make a rich wine such as you made once in Cana of Galilee.

I am not asking you tonight, Lord, for time to do this and then that,
But your grace to do conscientiously, in the time that you give me,
what you want me to do.

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



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 skillful 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!



CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS TO GOD

Dear God,
If you give me genie lamp like Alladin
I will give you anything you want
except my money or my chess set

Raphael



Dear God
My teacher is a rat.
you should give him a tail
HA ha

Danny

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

In all things God works for the good of those who love him.

Romans 8:28

Trust in providence means having confidence that God's goodness, power and wisdom are undergirding the world. It is the faith to say a resounding "Yes" to life despite all the troubles that life can throw at us. It can be described as the creative acceptance of God's will.

It is creative in the sense of taking a risk to renew our trust in God's providence when, and sometimes difficult, challenges come our way. When things occur that we do not like and we cannot change, it is then time to renew our trust.



Dear Friends,
We are a community of memory that looks back,
We are a community of Spirit that looks forward
It's important, though not easy, to look back with kindness and
look forward with hope.
Last year has gone, and a New Year beckons:
Let us hand over the past to God for his healing blessing,
Let us ask the Lord to face the future with us because we do
not want to face it alone
Let us pray for those we love and cherish, that each one may
know the promise of the Lord that brings the gospel to a close.

"Know this, I am with you - even to the end of the world"

Matthew 28:20

Tricia Bamford



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

There has been no meeting of the PCC since the last report, but nevertheless decisions made then have continued to be followed up. We are now employing a new cleaner (thank you) and expect to have a working piano in the church soon. An ongoing list of issues with the buildings, some of them tricky to solve, continues to occupy the maintenance team.

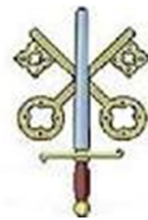
The social committee have worked very hard and through their efforts we have been able welcome many members of our community within our doors. The Christmas Tree festival was bigger and better than last year and was enjoyed by more visitors. The Community Choir concert, aided by the Brass Buttons quartet, drew an appreciative audience. The Christmas Fayre was also well received and raised a satisfying sum for church funds. The same can be said of the wreath making workshop held in the church hall. Look out for more events planned for 2025!

Christmas services – beginning with the Civic Carol Service and running right up to Christmas Day itself – are always a time when old and new friends are welcomed. The Crib Service on Christmas Eve was particularly well attended by around 110 adults and children of all ages enjoying storytelling, singing and building the Christmas Crib.

Mention must also be made of the New Year tea party, although the PCC had nothing to do with it apart from sitting back and enjoying being waited on by Claire Glover and her unfailingly polite and helpful young team from the Youth Club. It was a delight to see the church hall filled to bursting with people tucking into a more than generous high tea and enjoying one another's company. Hopefully the hall will be made use of for many more such events in future.



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



JANUARY – MARCH 2025

EVENTS

COFFEE MORNINGS

**22nd February & 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*

Christmas Tree Festival 2024:

At St Peter & St Pauls Church, Wem 1st -14th Dec

As in the previous year this event, was well supported with many trees brightening up the church from local businesses and organisations.

A touching addition this year was 'The Memory Tree' where people could write on card ornaments the names of those they wish to be remembered & hung on the tree.

Kim Archer



The Memory Tree





Wreath Making - Dec 15th

A first event held at St Peter & St Pauls Church Hall. It was well attended with over 30 people taking part. The afternoon was led by the very capable Jackie who runs Dasher florist in the Town. A short demonstration then led to everyone getting stuck in with foliage, dried fruit etc which was provided by Jackie.

A most lively & festive occasion with mulled wine served half way through, background Christmas music to sing along to and the surprise of Santa appearing to give out the Mince pies!

Fun was had by all & I can see this becoming a regular occasion every Dec!

Kim Archer





SMILES ALL ROUND AND LOTS OF GOOD CHEER!



******* IMPORTANT NOTICE *******

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.

A Message from Terry Hobday

Please will you thank the church members who signed the lovely sympathy card from St Peter's and St Paul's for me a little while back.

I really appreciated their kindness especially since it is a long time since I have been to church. Hopefully I will be in a better place and able to join you some time in the New Year.

I hope you have had a blessed and peaceful Christmas.

Terry x

FEBRUARY COFFEE MORNING

10:00 –12:00

IN ST PETER AND ST PAUL'S
CHURCH HALL

SATURDAY 22nd FEBRUARY

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



Getting ready
for the
Christmas
Fayre

which raised
£539.20 for
church funds.

*Smiles all
round.*

WELL DONE!



The Parish Church of St Peter, Lee Brockhurst

ADVANCE NOTICE

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.



St Peter's Church



Come and join us here on Wednesdays
19th February, 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



The Parish Church of St Luke,

Weston-under-Redcastle

WESTON NEWS



Our Christmas services were very well attended with 120 at the carol service on Christmas Eve, the sherry and mince pies were a big success!

In January we are very happy that our clock has been fitted with an automatic winding machine, much to the relief of our clock winders.

Our first fund raising event is to be held in February at the Hotel with a Bridge drive, organised by Pam and David Hiles. Please contact Pam for the date—it's soon! **Like the 13th!**

We had a wonderful service for William on the 22nd December to celebrate his time with us and to wish him well for his retirement.

We all agreed, that following a few difficult months in 2011/12, William came and rescued us, since then we have thrived with his help and guidance.

Colin spoke of William and our happy times together and presented him with a gift to show our appreciation.



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.

SINCERE APOLOGIES
FOR THE LATENESS OF THIS ISSUE.
WILL DO BETTER NEXT MONTH!!

Thank you very much
to all our contributors.

The March Issue
needs your input by the 18th of February,
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