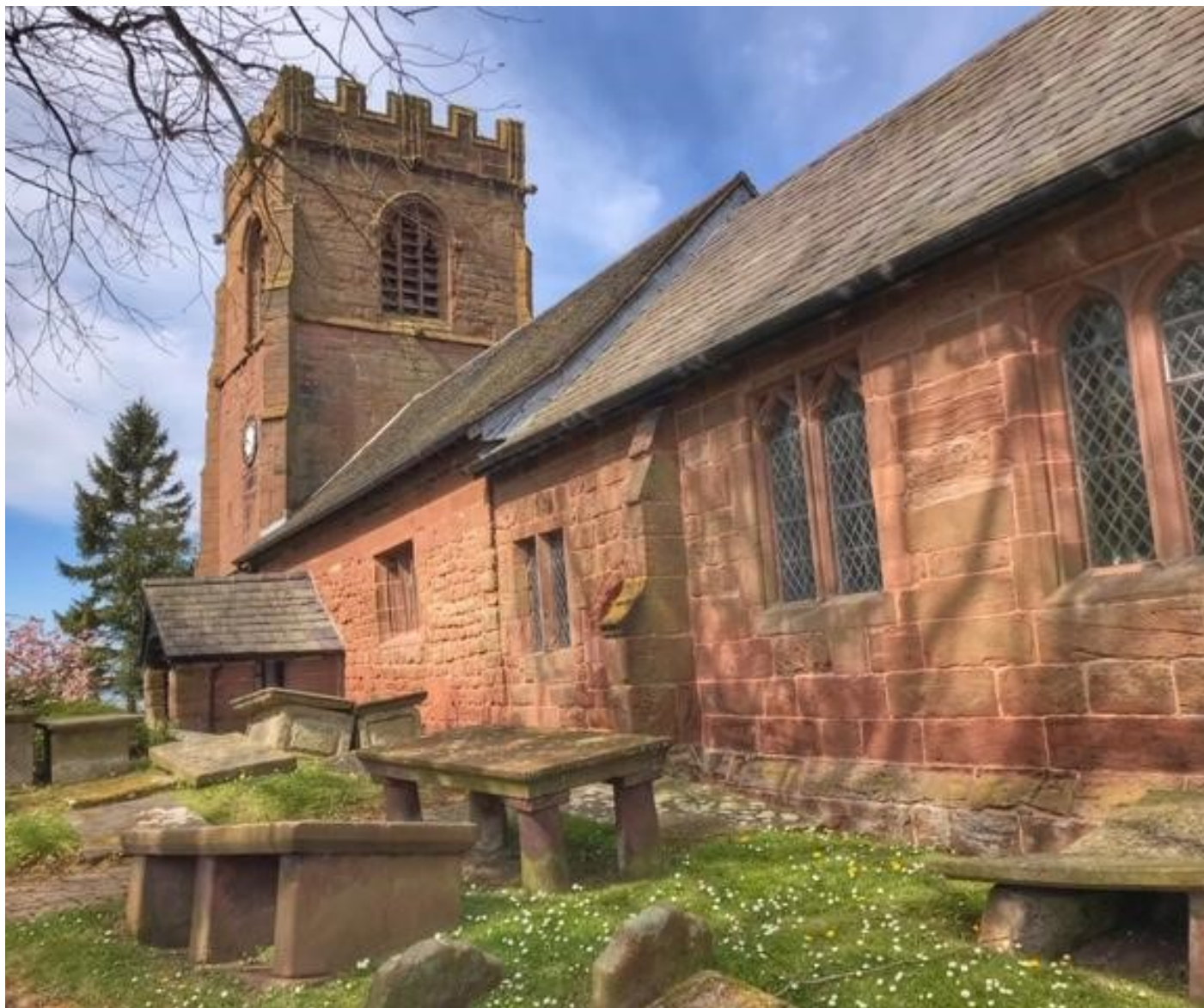


St. Michael's Church Shotwick

News Sheet November 2020



Photograph by Caroline Ellison

“Welcoming and active at the heart of the Parish”

A message from Cathy

We can easily recognise things that make us uncomfortable, such as uncertainty, something too tight or too lumpy, an embarrassing situation or person, being somewhere different, being too hot, too cold, music that's not to our taste or even too much rich food!

Conversely, things that bring comfort often bring a deep sense of joy and security, like an old jumper, chocolate, a hug, friends, family, a familiar place, a handshake, a comfy bed or favourite song or meal. These all evoke memories of security, of happy and certain times. They bring comfort.

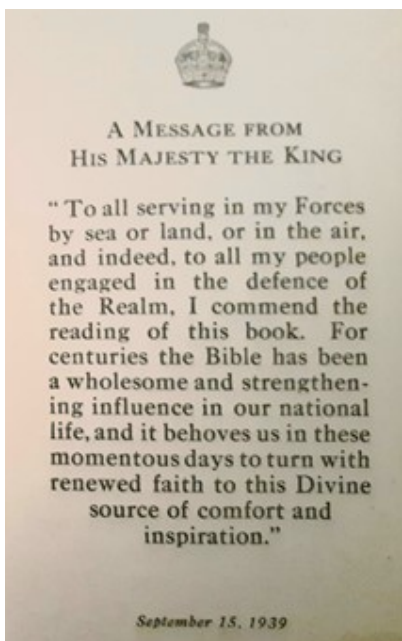
As we approach Christmas, with murmurings of cancelling it, 'after all, what's the point?', we may be thinking that comfort is a distant memory.

When Jesus was born to Mary and Joseph, I don't think the surroundings into which he was born were overly comfortable. There was the Roman occupation, the borrowed room, the journey and being a long way from home, let alone the disgrace of pregnancy before the wedding, not forgetting child birth which is not the most comfortable! Yet into this, God's angels bring a message that this child will bring 'Comfort and Joy', he will bring 'Peace on earth'. They needed comfort and joy, they needed peace and hope.

God's message didn't say all the external pressures and difficulties would go away, but rather that God had heard his people's cry. He recognised the need, He saw the pain, He stepped down into earth from heaven in Jesus to show us the depth of his saving love. The wonder of the incarnation is that Jesus, Immanuel *is* God with us.

In Jeremiah [not the most cheerful of prophets] 31: 13 God says' *I will give you comfort and joy instead of sorrow.*' When I looked for verses on joy there were over 212 to choose from! A favourite of the children at Bishop Wilson school is from Nehemiah 8: 10 '*The joy of the Lord is my strength.*'

Recently, sorting through Steve's parent's home, he found a small, well-kept St John's gospel. It had been given to his Dad during the war, with words from the King written in the front cover.



As King George VI clearly suggested, can we also discover the Divine source of comfort and inspiration in God's Word? Notice all the things I listed that bring us comfort are about physical, emotional and contextual needs.....what about our spiritual comfort?

Holding onto wonderful verses from Scripture can help us be certain that whatever else is happening, we can still know God's comfort and joy.

However we're able to spend Christmas this year, we can do so in the presence of the **COMFORT BRINGER** and the **JOY GIVER**, the New Year need not hold fear and trepidation, rather hope, because God is with us.

Services at St Michael's Church

From the beginning of July, churches have been permitted to have services in church again. We started having a shortened service in church on September 13th. The service reflected the one which was also sent out via email so that whether at home or in church we were following the same service.

It was lovely to see some of our congregation again, however if course, currently we are under Lockdown again and so services are sent out via email.

The church is open for private prayer twice a week as shown below. As a PCC we recognise the importance of having the church available for those who are able to come if they wish to.

At present we do not know what we will be allowed to do from December 2nd but will contact you via email if we are allowed back into church for services.

The emailed or posted services will continue to be sent out every weekend as long as they are needed.



**The church will continue to be open for private prayer on:
Wednesday mornings 11.00am - 12.00 noon
Sunday mornings 11.00am - 12.00 noon**

A prayer for difficult times

Excerpt from: Nick Fawcet. *"For Such a Time as This"*. Apple Books

*"Hold on to us, Lord,
through this troubled time.
Where there is sickness,
may there also be health.
Where there are tears,
may there also be laughter.
Where there is despair,
may there also be hope.
Where there is fear,
may there also be trust.
Where there is hardship,
may there also be help.
Where there is doubt,
may there also be faith.*

*Where there is weakness,
may there also be strength.
Where there is defeat,
may there also be victory.
Where there is chaos,
may there also be calm.
Where there are problems,
may there also be solutions.
Where there is distancing in body,
may there also be a coming together in spirit.
Where there is death,
may there also be life.
Come, Lord, and work your miracle of love,
out of darkness bringing light. Amen."*

Daily Hope

A Freephone line of hymns, reflections and prayers.

Looking for some daily hope during the lockdown?

The Church of England has a **FREE** telephone line for you to ring to listen to comforting hymns, daily prayers and reflections.

0800 804 8044

'Every Day with Jesus'

For many years the Bible notes 'Every Day with Jesus' have been published and brought God's Word and how to apply it to everyday life in a very readable and accessible way. The short daily reflections help people keep rooted in God's Word, whilst bring hope and good news in uncertain times.

These Bible notes are being offered **free of charge** in the UK to help to strengthen faith and provide comfort and hope from January 2021.

If you would like to receive them, you can order on line at waverleyabbeyresources.org/store or if you let me know I can order for you. Large print copies are also available.

I would highly recommend 'Every Day with Jesus' as an excellent way of taking a little time each day to hear from God's word and to be encouraged.

Cathy

A Time to Remember.

A prayer based on Psalm 46 for all those who left stones or lit candles in memory of their loved ones for the Time to Remember service.

God our refuge and strength,
close at hand in our distress;
meet us in our sorrow and lift our eyes to the peace and light of your constant care.
Help us so to hear your word of grace
that our fear may be dispelled by your love,
our loneliness eased by your presence
and our hope renewed by your promises.
In Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**



The APCM and Annual Church Meeting

The two meetings were held on Sunday 11th October.

June Pickard and Jenny Sneddon were elected as Church Wardens. Joanna Brookes, who is retiring from the post, was thanked for her stalwart service.

Caroline Ellison our treasurer gave a thorough summary of the Church finances. The year had been mixed between 'normal' and 'Covid lockdown' which commenced in March. Consequently we **were** about £4,000 down on finances.

Dear All Shotwick Friends,

I would like to take this opportunity to Thank You all for your friendship and support during my time, short as it was, as Church Warden for this wonderful little church. I took the decision that I could not continue to give Cathy and June the support they needed as 2020 brought my own personal health issues. It has brought my own "normal" health crashing down to a new level. A big thank you to Jenny **Seddon** for stepping up in my stead. I will endeavour to attend services as current restriction allow with the aid of Phil my green chariot and oxygen back pack.

As we have reached the end of the year, (how did that happen?) and I am restricted as to getting to shops, we have taken the decision this year we will wish you all a communal 'HAPPY CHRISTMAS' and a Good Healthy New Year 2021. We will not be sending Christmas cards this year but giving a donation to St Michaels with love.

Seasons Greetings,

God Bless Thank you,

Joanna and Philip Brookes.

Winter Food Bank Appeal

Throughout the Winter we will be collecting for the Food Bank. Please put your donations in the box at the rear of the Church. Items that are especially required include the following:

Sweets

- Chocolate
- UHT Long Life Juice
- Small Bottles of Cordial
- Cuppa Soups
- Pot Noodles
- Instant Pasta
- Pasta Sauce

Tinned Produce:-

- Potatoes
- Instant Custard
- Mash
- Puddings
- Fruit
- Fish
- Vegetables
- Tomatoes



Comfort and Joy

The Church of England is providing online a series of **Nine lessons and Carols from Christmas Day to 2nd January** with Carols, Readings and reflections from various leaders in the church including Archbishops Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell.

These can be accessed either on line or by downloading the app. All the resources can be found at www.churchofengland.org/comfortandjoy or #ComfortAndJoy

Health & Safety

HEALTH AND SAFETY

GUIDANCE FOR CHURCHES: THINGS YOU NEED TO DO

WHAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG?

RISK ASSESSMENTS BEFORE EACH SERVICE

HI-VIS JACKETS FOR SIDEPERSONS

A LIFEBELT NEXT TO THE FONT

PADDED BUFFERS ON PEW-ENDS FOR CHILDREN CAREERING AROUND THE AISLES AT HIGH SPEED

HARD HATS FOR ANYONE CARRYING A STICK

GLOVES TO BE USED BY ALL BISCUIT-ARRANGERS

A SERVER TO TRY THE COMMUNION WINE IN THE VESTRY (IN CASE POISONED)

PARACHUTE FOR EMERGENCY DESCENT FROM ORGAN LOFT

CartoonChurch.com



THE PRAYER BOOK SOCIETY

Introducing Bradley Smith, the new Chairman of the Prayer Book Society

I am writing to introduce myself as the new Chairman of the Prayer Book Society, elected in succession to Prudence Dailey at the society's AGM held online on 26th September 2020. You can read a little about my vision for the future in the Michaelmas issue of *The Prayer Book Today*: <https://www.pbs.org.uk/downloads/michaelmas-2020pbs.pdf>

This is an exciting time in the life of the Prayer Book Society as we work towards our 2030 Vision: '*People of all ages finding life in Christ through a growing Prayer Book service in every benefice*' and Corporate Member churches such as St Michael's will be key to turning that vision into reality. Let me take this opportunity to thank you for upholding our wonderful Anglican tradition of worship in your parish.

The Prayer Book society annual conference '*In Time of Plague or Sickness*' was held over an afternoon on line via ZOOM on 5th September and can be accessed via the web site www.pbs.org.uk/.

The AGM was held on 26th September also during an afternoon. Both events worked extremely well and we are encouraged to continue with this 'blended' format, when life returns to normal. There is no bar imposed by technology on the elderly of the Prayer Book Society, it would seem! Access is definitely improved for many more people.

From Prayer Book Society communications officer Tim Stanley:

North Yorkshire's Bolton Priory, said to be one of the finest medieval churches in the north of England, is the latest to join the Prayer Book Society as a corporate member.

The rector, the Rev Nicholas Mercer – formerly rector of Christ Church Cathedral in Stanley, the capital of the Falkland Islands – reports that, since the year it was published, the 1662 Book of Common Prayer has been used at Bolton Priory for all Sunday services.

Photo courtesy of Tim Stanley, the Prayer Book Society.



Bolton Priory

The Church in the Cheltenham Literature Festival

<https://cheltenhamliteraturefestival.com/events/whats-the-point-of-saints/>

“It has been a year since Cardinal John Henry Newman was canonised by Pope Francis in St Peter’s Square, the first English saint to be proclaimed in over 600 years, other than as a martyr. What is our modern understanding of sainthood, and why, historically, theologically and ecumenically is Newman’s canonisation so significant? **Allan Mallinson** discusses these questions with **Monsignor Roderick Strange** (*Newman: The Heart of Holiness*), historian and former Anglican seminarian **AN Wilson**, and **Ruth Gledhill**, former *Times* religious affairs correspondent and now online editor of *The Tablet*. Due to unforeseen circumstances A N Wilson was not part of this event.”

The talk covered the essence of faith ethics and morals – using Cardinal Newman as an example. The first saint to be canonised in England since the Reformation who was not a martyr.

Initially Newman saw Anglicanism as a middle way between Protestant error and Catholic excess. He remained a person of open mind post conversion – maintaining that there were always more sides to an open question to be explored. Newman was a proponent of Ecumenism: seeking unity through friendship.

Jenny Sneddon

Special Birthdays!!



These lovely unique and personalised collages are sewn by Chester Artist Ruth Brickland

www.ruth-brickland.co.uk

They were given to Jenny and Joan by Vanessa for significant birthdays.

“I glued a coffee cup to my car roof and now I don't feel lonely because everyone waves at me.”

Jenny

Thankful Villages

In England and Wales there are a number of communities which saw all their men return safely from the First World War. The term to describe them, "Thankful Villages", was coined in the 1930s by the writer and journalist Arthur Mee who used it in his guide to the counties of England, "The King's England". Whilst travelling round the country he found 32 settlements without a war memorial. The total has since risen but the exact figure is not known due to discrepancies in record keeping. An article in the Daily Telegraph last year put the number at 56 - 53 in England and 3 in Wales. Seventeen of these villages are "Doubly Thankful" having lost no men or women in the Second World War either. So far no Thankful Villages have been identified in Scotland or Ireland (all of Ireland was then part of the UK).

There are no Thankful Villages in Cheshire but there are two in Lancashire, both Doubly Thankful. Arkholme and Nether Kellet are only 5 miles apart and between them they sent 80 men to war, all of whom remarkably survived - 59 from Arkholme which had 320 inhabitants and 21 from Nether Kellet.

Another Doubly Thankful village, Middleton-on-the-Hill in Herefordshire, does have a war memorial in the form of a lantern. It stands in the churchyard of St Mary's Church and the inscription on it reads:

***A thank offering to Almighty God
"At evening time it shall be light"
for the safe return of all the men from this parish
who fought in the Great War 1914 - 1918
and 1939 - 1945***

There is an intriguing story relating to the village of Catwick in East Yorkshire. In 1914 the blacksmith John Hugill nailed 30 coins to a doorpost below a lucky horseshoe, one for each man who joined up. At the end of the war all 30 came home though one man "left an arm behind" according to Arthur Mee. John Hugill took one of the coins off, cut a piece out of it, and nailed it back again. In an amazing coincidence exactly the same thing happened in the Second World War with 30 men going off to war and all returning safely, thus making Catwick a Doubly Thankful village. As before 30 coins were nailed on to a doorpost and all 60 coins still remain in the village, now in the possession of another John Hugill, grandson of the blacksmith

Upper Slaughter, in contrast to its name, is a peaceful village in the Cotswolds and it is also Doubly Thankful. In the village hall there are two plaques, the first to give thanks for the 24 men and one woman who returned in 1918, the second, erected in 1946 to celebrate the safe return of the 36 men who served in the Second World War. The name of one man, Francis George Collett appears on both plaques as he had the rare distinction of serving in both wars. George Collett, as he was known, hand carved the second plaque and his son Tony hand painted the letters to match the first one.

I have known about Thankful Villages for many years but after staying in one (Teigh in Rutland) two years ago I decided it would be interesting to visit as many as possible. Not surprisingly many of them are small villages, some in the depths of the country. I have managed to visit 16 so far including 5 on a recent holiday to Somerset which, with a total of 9, has the most of any county. If there are 56 Thankful Villages that leaves me with 40 more to seek out.

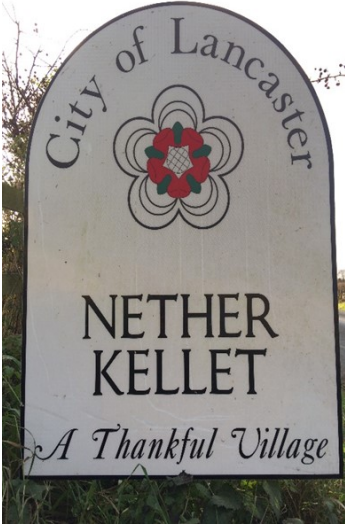
Vanessa Stevens



Rodney Stoke, Somerset



Coln Rogers, Gloucestershire



Nether Kellet, Lancashire

Harvest Festival

For obvious reasons the Harvest Festival service which took place on 11 October had to be held in line with the Government's guidelines on social distancing. Archdeacon Michael Gilbertson, along with Cathy, held a lovely service outside in the churchyard on a sunny afternoon. Twenty-nine people attended and we raised over £1,000 for Church funds which was wonderful, and Vanessa took a boot load of donations for the food bank. Thanks to everybody who contributed to this effort. We did not decorate the Church this year but, as Cathy said "we are able to worship in the beauty of this place, enjoying the surrounding views and wildlife." (*Flock of geese flew past, cows in the next field and sun shining!*)

