

Tower and Spire

Parish Magazine of
St Michael and St Wulfad, Stone
and St Saviour, Aston

July/August 2026

30p
£2.50 annually
(10 editions)



I Soffiatori recorder consort giving a wonderful concert of Tudor music and dance at St Saviour's Church

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

John 13 v 35

St Michael and St Wulfad, Stone

Sundays

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

11.00am Family Communion (Order one)

Thursdays

10.30am Holy Communion

St Saviour, Aston

Sundays All at 9.15am

1st Sunday Morning Prayer (Book of Common Prayer 1662)

2nd Sunday Holy Communion (CW Order 1)

3rd Sunday Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer 1662)

4th Sunday Holy Communion (CW Order 1)

5th Sunday Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer 1662)

Church Groups

	Meet at	Meet on	Contact	Phone
<i>Adventurers Children's Club</i>	St Michael's School	Thursday 3.30-4.45 pm (Term time)	Dennis Abbott	814134
<i>Sunday School</i>	St Michael's Church	Sunday 10.45am	Jill Bramham	07491 311832
<i>Choir Practice</i>	Church	Friday 7.00pm	Nichola Abbott	814134
<i>Bellringing Practice</i>	Church belfry	Thursday 7.30pm	Peter Burgess	07921 944841
<i>Drop Inn</i>	St Michael's Hall	Tuesday 11.45am till 1.00pm	Nichola Abbott	814134
<i>Jelly Tots</i>	St Michael's Church	Tuesday 9.30am till 11.00am	Jenny Burton	07947 636408

Reflections from the Rector

IT's COMING HOME (Isn't it)



As the World Cup unfolds, many of us are watching with excitement. Yet beyond the goals, the drama, the controversy and the commentary, we can glean a timely spiritual lesson for the Church.

The Game Has Changed

Compared with the tournaments 30 years ago and the players of the 70s and 80s; football today is faster, more tactical, more disciplined, and more demanding. Training is more rigorous, preparation more intentional, and the environment carefully managed. To compete, teams must adapt and give their all.

In many ways, this mirrors our world. Culture has changed, technology has changed, and expectations have changed. The Church is not called to leave the field, but to remain wise, prepared, and faithful in a changing environment.

We are called not only to understand the times, but to know what to do in them.
1 Chronicles 12:32

The Pundits and the Players

One thing that has not changed: there have always been pundits. They watch, analyse, praise, criticise, and offer strong opinions. But no matter how loud their commentary, they do not change the score. The game is won or lost by those on the pitch.

That picture speaks powerfully of the Church. It is easy to become spiritual pundits, commenting on sermons, worship, leadership, and outreach, or talking about what is wrong with “the team.” But the Kingdom of God is not advanced by spectators. The Lord has called us all to participation.

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” James 1:22

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”

1 Corinthians 12:27

In God's eyes, there are no fans in the stands, only members of Christ's body, each with a role to play.

On the Field, Not Just in the Stands

The Church exists not for commentary, but for **mission**. Every believer has a role: some protect and pray, some connect and serve, some boldly witness, and some watch faithfully in prayer. But no one is called merely to watch.

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." 1 Peter 4:10

In an earlier era, a player might have succeeded with less preparation. But not now. Likewise, **casual Christianity** (or lukewarm as Jesus rebukes in the book of Revelation) will not do in this season. We need deeper grounding in God's Word, more disciplined prayer, intentional fellowship, accountability, and courageous witness in a changing culture. The pitch has changed, but the goal remains the same: to glorify Christ and make Him known.

From Critic to Contributor

So what does it look like to move from being a pundit to becoming a player? Instead of saying, "The church should...", we should ask, "Lord, how can I help?" Instead of pointing out problems, we should ask, "What part can I play in the solution?" Instead of standing at a distance, we should step closer, to serve, give, support, encourage, and pray.

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'" Isaiah 6:8

A Call for This Season

As we enjoy this World Cup, let it be more than entertainment. Let it remind us that while the game has changed, faithfulness is still required; while culture shifts, Christ's mission remains; and while pundits may talk, players make the difference. May we not be found in the stands with folded arms, but on the pitch of God's mission, faithful, available, and ready to serve for the glory of Jesus Christ.

With love in Christ,

Rev'd Robert

.News from St Michael & St Wulfad's



Dear Friends,

I hope you are enjoying the lighter nights and, hopefully some warmer weather to come again.

We recently welcomed two new members to our congregation – Paul and Carlynn Wignall. Paul is a retired priest and has been granted Permission to Officiate in the Lichfield Diocese. He will be helping out from time to time in our Benefice. Carlynn will be helping Jill with Sunday School and CU@4.

Quite a few things going on in July. On Saturday 4th July, church will be open from 10am until 2pm for a look around or private prayer. You will find an oasis of calm amidst the hustle and bustle of the Farmers Market. On Wednesday 8th July we will be hosting the Ecumenical Prayer Meeting. Arrive from 7pm for refreshments and the meeting will start at 7.30pm. All are welcome to attend.

Civic Sunday will take place on Sunday 12th July at 11am. We will be joined by the new town mayor and his consort, civic guests and many local organisations. The new mayor will take his Oath of Office. All are welcome to attend.

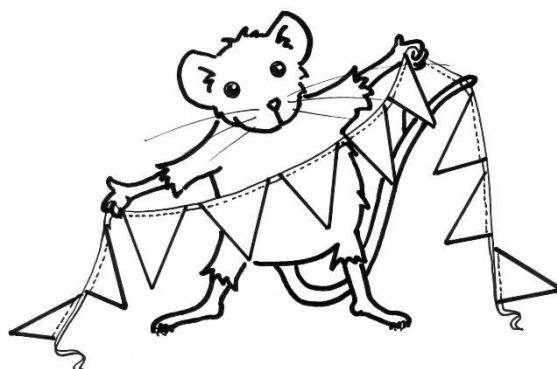
The next session of CU@4 our all-age worship service will take place on Sunday 19th July at 4pm. All welcome to attend.

On Saturday 25th July we are holding a St Wulfad's Family Fun Day from 10am until 3pm. If the weather is good, it will be outside in the church grounds. There will be two performances by Florence Brass along with various stalls and games. Cream Teas will also be served. Admission is free.

August will be a quiet month, but church will continue to be open each Saturday from 10am until 2pm and CU@4 will take place on Sunday 16th August.

Enjoy the rest of summer and we will see you in September.

Nichola



Reader's Rambles



"Here comes summer, school is out, oh happy day" so sang Jerry Keller in 1959

Yes, here indeed is summer. A time for holidays, rest, relaxation, sun, sea, sangria (other refreshments are available) and this refreshment includes the spiritual sort.

The world we live in today is frantic, fast paced, and it is too easy to become overwhelmed by the demands of work, study, family, and our own personal challenges. While physical rest on a holiday, for example, might help to rest the body, there is also a need for spiritual refreshment—a renewal of the mind, the heart, and the soul.

Spiritual refreshment, I suggest, means renewing your spiritual well-being through activities such as prayer, meditation, worship, reflection, reading your bible, or spending quiet moments with nature, even if this is just sitting in your garden or on your balcony. These things should help us to reconnect with our values, beliefs, and our relationship with God, and as a result, experience comfort, guidance, and an inner peace.

One of the greatest benefits of spiritual refreshment is the peace it brings. In times of stress and uncertainty, spiritual practices can calm the mind and reduce anxiety, encouraging you to focus on positive things with gratitude, and faith rather than fear and worry.

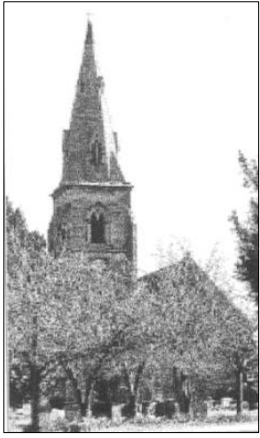
So, along with the R & R just remember that spiritual refreshment is essential for a balanced and meaningful life. Just as the body requires nourishment and rest, so the spirit requires renewal and care. So, this summer, make time for spiritual refreshment, you might be surprised to see an improvement in your well-being and live a more fulfilling life enjoying many a "Lovely Day"

And may you have many more than the 54 as repeated by Bill Withers!

Dennis

The Christian Aid Walk

The Christian Aid Walk around Tittesworth reservoir this year raised £30,000. The organisers pass on thanks to everybody who contributed and to remind you that the date for 2027 is set and will be Saturday March 13th. Dennis



St Saviour's News

Find us on social media - @stsaviouraston –

Congratulations and very best wishes to Scott Baxter and Louise Baker on their wedding at St Saviour's on Saturday the 16th May.



Christian Aid Week – 10-16 May –

The amount raised this year from the collection for Christian Aid raised £180. The funds raised help some of the world's poorest people and very grateful thanks go to all those who made a donation.



Thank you very much to Lyn & John Hammersley for organising the Coffee Concert by I Soffiotori Recorder Consort held on the 30th May.

It was a lovely concert and everyone who came seemed to enjoy themselves – even those who were persuaded to join in the dancing!



Forthcoming Events:

Wednesday 8th July at 7.30pm – Cantiamo Chamber Choir Summer Concert conducted by Harriet Atherton. Beautiful music to brighten a summer evening, a mixed programme of inspiring choral music – intimate, expressive, and full of colour. Do come along and enjoy the evening. Tickets cost £10 which includes a drink.

Sunday 19th July – Afternoon Tea followed by Evensong. Evensong is a traditional (Book of Common Prayer 1662), beautiful and uplifting service and a perfect way to end the day, so I invite you to come along; the service will start at approximately 6.30pm, whilst afternoon tea will be served from about 5.30pm.

During the next month or two, a survey of the monuments in the churchyard will be undertaken. Should any gravestone be found to be unsafe a notice will be attached requesting that it is repaired. I would also like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that there are regulations covering what may or may not be placed on a gravestone; there is a copy of the regulations in the church porch, but as a general guideline nothing should be placed on a memorial apart from fresh flowers, or wreaths at Christmas time.

Mary Babb

Online Payments

QR codes to scan to make a church donation, please tick if you would like to gift aid the donation.

St Michael's & St Wulfad's, Stone



St Michael & St Wulfad's, Stone

St Saviour's, Aston



St Saviour's, Aston

Benefice Diary for July 26

- 1 *Henry, John, and Henry Venn the younger, Priests, Evangelical Divines, 1797, 1813 and 1873*
- 3 Thomas the Apostle
- 6 *Thomas More, Scholar, and John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, Reformation Martyrs, 1535*
- 11 Benedict of Nursia, Abbot of Monte Cassino, Father of Western Monasticism, c.550
- 12 Civic Service. 11.00 St Michael & St Wulfad**
- 14 John Keble, Priest, Tractarian, Poet, 1866
- 15 Swithun, Bishop of Winchester, c.862
- 15 *Bonaventure, Friar, Bishop, Teacher of the Faith, 1274*
- 16 *Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury, 1099*
- 18 *Elizabeth Ferard, first Deaconess of the Church of England, Founder of the Community of St Andrew, 1883*
- 19 Afternoon Tea at 5.30pm followed by Evensong at St Saviour's**
- 19 Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, and his sister Macrina, Deaconess, Teachers of the Faith, c.394 and c.379
- 20 *Margaret of Antioch, Martyr, 4th century*
- 20 *Bartolomé de las Casas, Apostle to the Indies, 1566*
- 22 Mary Magdalene
- 23 *Bridget of Sweden, Abbess of Vadstena, 1373*
- 23 10.30a.m. + Michael Preaching & Presiding**
- 25 St Wulfad's Day: garden party**
- 25 James the Apostle
- 26 CU@4**
- 26 Anne and Joachim, Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- 27 *Brooke Foss Westcott, Bishop of Durham, Teacher of the Faith, 1901*
- 29 Mary, Martha and Lazarus, Companions of Our Lord
- 30 William Wilberforce, Social Reformer; Olaudah Equiano and Thomas Clarkson Anti-Slavery Campaigners, 1833, 1797 and 1846
- 31 *Ignatius of Loyola, Founder of the Society of Jesus, 1556*



Benefice Diary for August 26

- 4 *Jean-Baptiste Vianney, Curé d'Ars, Spiritual Guide, 1859*
- 5 Oswald, King of Northumbria, Martyr, 642
- 6 The Transfiguration of Our Lord
- 7 *John Mason Neale, Priest, Hymn Writer, 1866*
- 8 Dominic, Priest, Founder of the Order of Preachers, 1221
- 9 Mary Sumner, Founder of the Mothers' Union, 1921
- 10 Laurence, Deacon at Rome, Martyr, 258
- 11 Clare of Assisi, Founder of the Minoreesses (Poor Clares), 1253
- 11 *John Henry Newman, Priest, Tractarian, 1890*
- 13 Jeremy Taylor, Bishop of Down and Connor, Teacher of the Faith, 1667
- 13 *Florence Nightingale, Nurse, Social Reformer, 1910*
- 13 *Octavia Hill, Social Reformer, 1912*
- 14 *Maximilian Kolbe, Friar, Martyr, 1941*
- 15 The Blessed Virgin Mary
- 16 CU@4
- 20 Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, Teacher of the Faith, 1153
- 20 *William and Catherine Booth, Founders of the Salvation Army, 1912 and 1890*
- 24 Bartholomew the Apostle
- 27 Monica, mother of Augustine of Hippo, 387
- 28 Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, Teacher of the Faith, 430
- 29 The Beheading of John the Baptist
- 30 John Bunyan, Spiritual Writer, 1688
- 31 Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne, Missionary, 651

Register for May 26

There were no occasional offices at St Michael and St Wulfad's in May.

There was one wedding at St Saviour's: 16 May - Scott Bryan Baxter and Louise Ellen Baker

St Michael's Community Hall

Lichfield Street, Stone ST15 8BB

Available for bookings – private parties or regular meetings.

Competitive rates.

Contact: **Dennis Abbott 01785 814134** for details

FAIRWAY SERVICE STATION

Lichfield Road
Stone, Staffs.



Tel: 812548

www.fairwayss.co.uk

email: info@fairwayss.co.uk

Petrol Motor vehicle repairs

Newsagents National Lottery

Off licence Convenience store

Will Tonge



Stone, Stafford and surrounding
areas

Call or Text: 07968 591699

Email: will@passwithwill.com

*Helping you become a safe,
confident driver*



Plumbing and Household Maintenance

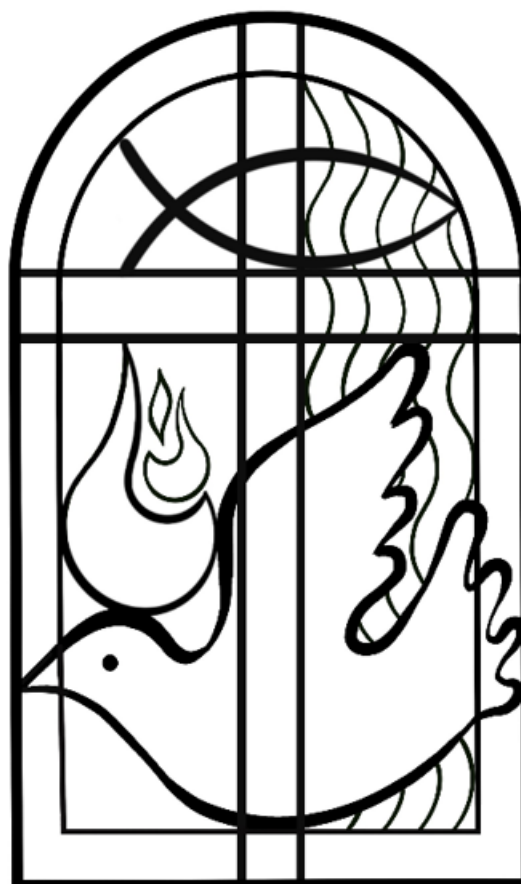
JOEL GAMBLE

- ★ No job too small.
- ★ Plumbing,
- ★ Guttering, Drainage,
- ★ Fencing,
- ★ Garden maintenance,
- ★ Painting & much more.
- ★ City and Guilds qualified.

Mobile 07544 681 540

Email:

joelgamble1990@hotmail.com



Sovereign

Wedding Car Hire



Quality Services at
Competitive Prices

A wide range of cars including:
Beaufords White Rolls Royce
Daimler and Mercedes
7 Seater White Limousines

EACH WEDDING IS TAILORED TO SUIT
YOUR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

www.sovereignweddingcarhire.co.uk
enquiries@sovereignweddingcarhire.co.uk

For more Information Or
To Arrange Viewing Call

(01782) 811411

All Areas Covered

Garage: 2 Wedgwood Street, Burslem
Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 4JH



Private Chapels of Kent
Embalming Services
24hr. Personal Service

TUDOR - DAVIES

(Incorporating Fairbanks Funeral Services)

"The Beeches" 142 Waterloo Road
Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 3HB

Telephone: 01782 811411

www.tudor-davies.co.uk

Email: enquiries@tudor-davies.co.uk



Floral Tributes
Catering
Monumental Services
Pre-Payment
Funeral Plans

**Golden
Charter**
Funeral
Plans



Partners: Geoff Tudor, MBIE, Dip.FD & Barry Davies
Residence: Fairfield, 96 Longton Road, Barlaston, Staffs, ST12 9AU
Telephone: 01782 373933

Price and Stubbs

(A. Boulton & Sons Ltd)

Est 1946

COMPLETE FUNERAL SERVICE

MILL STREET, STONE
STONE 01785 812556



- DAY OR NIGHT
- FLORAL TRIBUTES
- CATERING
- PRIVATE CHAPELS OF REST
- MEMORIALS
- PRE-PAYMENT SCHEMES

THE MILL

@ S T O N E



*The Catering Venue
For All Your Needs:
Weddings, Anniversaries
Birthdays and Wakes*

Website:

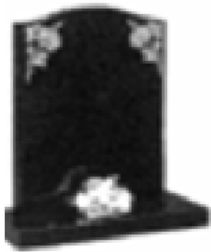
www.themillrestaurant.org.uk

Phone:

01785 818 456



The Mill Hotel and
Restaurant



OWENS MEMORIALS

**For Churchyard
and Cemetery**

21 Queen Street
Market Drayton
TF9 1PS

01630 654135

Email: office@owensmemorials.co.uk
Website: www.owensmemorials.co.uk

STONE CHIROPODY

State registered chiropodist

Lisa Garside B.Sc. hons.
and Associates

Moorfield Chambers
9 Margaret Street
Stone ST15 8EL

Tel: 01785 818796

Day, evening and weekend
appointments available

Home visits available on request

Your home is your
sanctuary.

When the people you love become less independent, what happens to their sanctuary?

The idea of care for your loved ones can be daunting and these decisions are never easy. You might not know who can help, who to speak to or even where to start. We understand the feeling.

Since 2008 we here at **Home Instead Stafford, Cheadle and Stone** have been supporting our clients to live the lives they deserve. We are different, because it matters to us.

If you believe we could be of service to you or a loved one and you'd like to find out more, you can get in touch using the details below or scan the QR code to the right.

T: 01785 817339
E: stafford@homeinstead.co.uk
W: homeinstead.co.uk



**Home
Instead.**
To us, it's personal



ISOBEL WHITTAKER

INDEPENDENT FUNERAL SERVICES



60 PIREHILL LANE, WALTON,
STONE, ST15 0JN
WWW.IWFFUNERAL.CO.UK

- 24 HOUR PERSONAL SERVICE
- PRIVATE CHAPEL OF REST
- FUNERAL PLANS
- MEMORIAL WORK
- TRADITIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS
- PACKAGES STARTING AT £1000



CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION OR ADVICE

01785 336722

St Michael's CE (VC) First School, Stone

"Through God: we love, laugh and learn"



"Adventurers" a Christian after-school club open to all children in the school, is held on most Thursday afternoons

Headteacher: Mrs J Wass

Contact details: 01785 334930

office@@st-michaels-stone.staffs.sch.uk

Christian values underpin all school life.

St Michael's Nursery

St Michael's CE (VC) First School, Stone

Our school nursery is open from 8.50am to 3.30pm during term time. We accept children from their 3rd birthday, and have funded places available for 3 and 4 year olds.

To arrange a visit to see all that we have to offer your child please call our school office on 01785 334930.

'The Green Bus'

Would you like to join us for worship at St Michael & St Wulfad's? If you need transport, a free mini bus service runs to the 11.00 am service on Sundays.

If you would like us to pick you up (and take you home again) please call to arrange it with **Chris Melia** on **07779 228286**

St Michael's CE (VC) First School

At St Michael's CE (VC) First School we have our WOW weeks, children never know when they are going to happen or what they will be learning about. To celebrate the start of the Football World Cup we had a World Cup themed Wow Week!

It has been amazing to see the children so enthused about sport and countries around the world. Through the World Cup 2026, our children have taken part in a wide variety of activities: learning about different flags; map work; fact files using their writing skills; art work around the world; food tasting; sporting activities - these are just a sample of what has been seen going on around school.

It has also been a great opportunity to think about our Christian value of respect. We have all been considering how we respect other countries and cultures and how respect plays an enormous part in sport so that everyone - players, referees, spectators - can all enjoy themselves.

We look forward to the last few weeks of the school year, packed with exciting learning and fun.

Kind regards

Mrs Julia Wass

Headteacher St Michael's CE (VC) First School

Tower & Spire - Editor's in Tray

I do hope you enjoy this July/August edition packed with articles and photos. In August our contributors have a well-earned holiday, so our next edition will be the September 2026 one. Contributions **MUST** be submitted by **Friday 14th August 26**. If you would like the magazine emailed to you every month in full glorious colour, then do let me know. It is sent out by Dennis as a PDF and blind copied so your email address will not be circulated to other readers.

Email: towerandspiremagazine@gmail.com

Once again thank you for all your support.

Fred Bramham, Editor

The Grade Listed pillars have now been straightened, the pineapples (or acorns) have been replaced on the top. Hopefully no more cars will drive into them. Thank you for Stafford Council Support. Reverend Robert



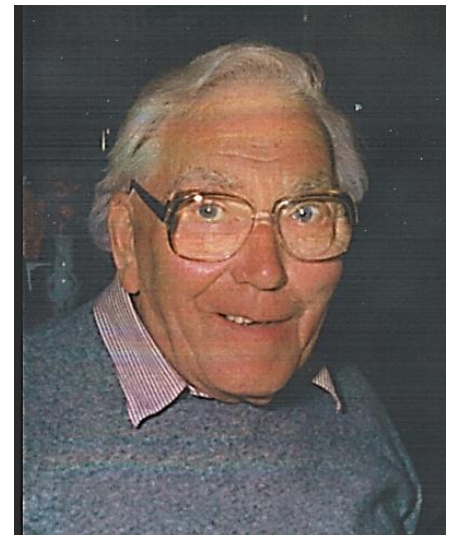
Dennis Abbott Delves into Past Magazines

JULY 1966

Letter from the Curate

Dear Rector,

May I once again use the "Review" to express the very real gratitude of myself and my family to the Church at S Michael's, Aston and Burston for their more than generous Whitsun offering conveyed to us by the good offices of yourself and the Churchwardens. It goes without saying that where a family is making its various demands, this special gift made by the Church is most helpful and welcome. Thank you once again to all our friends for this practical expression of love and affection.



Yours most Sincerely

Bill Goldstraw, Curate from 1961 to 1968

W H Goldstraw

Curate

National Safeguarding Standards: **Our parish**

THE FIVE STANDARDS

1 Culture, Leadership and Capacity

Church bodies have safe and healthy cultures, effective leadership, resourcing and scrutiny arrangements necessary to deliver high quality safeguarding practices and outcomes.

2 Prevention

Church bodies have in place a planned range of measures which together are effective in preventing abuse in their context.

3 Recognising, Assessing and Managing Risk

Risk assessments, safety plans and associated processes are of a high quality and result in positive outcomes. The assessment and management of risk is underpinned by effective partnership working.

4 Victims and Survivors

Victims and survivors experience the timeliness and quality of Church bodies' responses to disclosures, and their subsequent support, as positively meeting their needs, including their search for justice and helping their healing process.

5 Learning, Supervision and Support

All those engaged in safeguarding related activity in Church bodies receive the type and level of learning, professional development, support and supervision necessary to respond to safeguarding situations, victims and survivors, and respondents, effectively.

Belfry News



On Saturday 2nd May Lizanne welcomed visitors from Aldgate and Hackney who were touring our area adding to their list of new towers.

While on a ringing tour in the Suffolk area, on Sunday 3rd May Greg rang on the oldest ring of 8 bells in the world at St Mary's Horham.

On Monday 18th May Margaret, Peter and myself were joined by 7 other ringers to ring a quarter peal of Little Bob Royal at St Michael's. This was the first of Royal by Charlie, our young education officer and Keele university student, Eden.

On Friday 15th May I joined fellow North Staffs Ringers at St John the Baptist, Barlaston to ring for the funeral service of Chris Rice, a respected, popular consultant at Royal Stoke hospital, who was also a bell ringer.

The next morning Seren and I joined in the learner's session at St Mary's Stafford, after which 8 experienced ringers, including myself and Margaret, rang for the Mayor's Service.

On Sunday afternoon 17th May I took Seren to the monthly young ringers meeting to experience ringing on the very light 8 bells at St Mary the Virgin Wistaston and then on the heavy 8 bells at St Mary's Nantwich.

Margaret and I joined the Tuesday Daytime band on 19th May ringing at St Margaret's Wolstanton in the morning followed by lunch at the Polite Vicar and ringing at Christ Church Tunstall.

The Cheshire ringers have monthly meetings on the third Wednesday of every month, and on Wednesday 20th May they came to St Michael's, where I was invited to join them including a convivial meal beforehand at the Crown Wharf.

The Lichfield Diocesan Mobile Belfry was at the County Show again this year. On Wednesday 29th May it was manned by the North Staffs Association, and on Thursday Seren and I helped out with the Lichfield and Walsall Archdeaconries Society with the aim of drawing people's attention to how church bells are rung. It usually attracts a lot of young children who are happy to hear themselves ring a bell and make a lot of noise by just chiming.

I helped to make up the team on Friday 5th June to ring at Stoke Minster who were holding a festival on the first anniversary of the celebration of the Centenary of Stoke-on-Trent having city status.

On Saturday 6th June St Peter's church, Marchington was full of ringers from all

over the area to compete in the annual 6 bell striking competition. With the rules stating that a competing band should be from one tower, but can include one visitor to make up, I joined the Chebsey ringers, as St Michael's could not make up



a full team to compete. As many young ringers were from different towers they entered 2 teams, one under 19 years and one under 30 years. There was also a scratch band of a variety of ages from different towers including Seren, (see photo).

Jenny Beech

St Michael's at Stone Carnival



Jelly Tots

Jelly Tots have had a brilliant few weeks learning about the weather, making weather wands and magnets for Father's Day or for those special people in our lives.



REPORT ON THE MAY MEETING OF ASTON-BY-STONE W.I.

REPORT ON THE JUNE 2026 MEETING OF ASTON-BY-STONE W.I.

HECKLED BY A HEN!

At the June meeting of Aston-by-Stone W.I., strange noises were heard at intervals while President Pam Lowe and Secretary Nikki Walker were going through the business. Just soft noises at first, then more insistent and more frequently.



It turned out to be a hen called Diva – always wants the limelight – which had been brought by Member Chris Payne, to illustrate her talk on hen-keeping. Chris stepped in at the eleventh hour to replace the advertised Speaker, who had unfortunately been taken ill. So instead of hearing about a flying ambulance we heard about non-flying hens: they have a wing clipped to discourage them from taking to the skies.

Chris's affection for her hens was obvious, and she spoke entertainingly and knowledgeably about them. We met Millicent, a well-behaved Mille Fleur gold bantam, and Diva, who gradually became more and more vocal and had to be put back into her cage to discourage further remarks!

We learned a great deal about keeping hens. They need a certain amount of light in order to start producing eggs, for example. Chicks, when newly hatched, will imprint on the first living being they see, so that's why some hens follow their keeper around.

It had been a very busy week for Aston-by-Stone W.I., with several activities which will appear in a separate report, and now we look forward to our next meeting. On 8th July, SOS Fashion will present a Fashion Show, when our members will be the models. It is an Open meeting: all are welcome, so do please come to see us. We meet in Aston-by-Stone Village Hall at 7.30, and after the Show there will be tea and home-made cakes.

Visitors are welcome at all our meetings. To find out more, please visit secretary.astonbystonewi@gmail.com

Kate Wain

CU@4 : Pentecost



As the May service fell on Pentecost, we took that as our theme. After opening prayers Dennis gave a PowerPoint presentation on the background to this feast. This included a map showing all the countries listed in Acts 2:1-12 from where Jews visiting Jerusalem for Passover came from and heard the disciples speaking in their different languages. The children then enjoyed making kites. This was a tangible way to help them understand the power of the Holy Spirit at work; that one can experience the effects just as we can see a kite moving by the invisible force of the wind. We sang the song 'Spirit of the

living God' and closed with prayers.

Sunday School

There have been three sessions recently. As the first one fell on Trinity Sunday we talked about the three persons of God – the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. To help the children understand this concept the craft activities involved sticking relevant pictures onto a paper plate divided into three segments. A second plate was placed on top with one section cut away, so that when it was rotated it revealed in turn God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost.

In the second session we found out about what happened when Matthew the tax collector met Jesus. The children enjoyed



assembling and decorating a 'strong box' such as Matthew would have used. Then they completed a 'change of heart' activity where they wrote appropriate adjectives onto a heart-shaped card which looked dark and gloomy on one side and bright on the other, representing how Matthew felt before and after his encounter.

In the third session each of the children completed a chart with 12 different coloured pieces of card attached, one for each of the 12 disciples. After adding the disciples' names, we pooled what information we knew about each of them and wrote this on the inside of each card for reference.

Thank you for your continuing support and prayers.

Collage Café

The theme for the May session was Pentecost. Group members created collages inspired by the 'violent wind' and 'tongues of fire' referenced in Acts 2:1-12. The June session was



based on Jesus' words in Matthew 6:28-30: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

Group members used a wide selection of fresh flowers and foliage to create floral arrangements which when photographed can be transformed into greetings

cards.

Collage Café usually meets on the second Thursday of each month at Stone Library from 10.00am to 12.00 noon. For more information and to check dates please contact Jill on 07491 311832

Jill Bramham



New!



St Michael and St Wulfad's
Church
Church Street
Stone, ST15 8BD

Saturdays 10:00 - 14:00
(no accessible toilet)

**A place where everyone can feel safe to
connect, belong and contribute!**



Church Saturday opening rota

Over the last few months we have been opening the church on Saturdays, from 10am till 2pm.

If possible, please can you offer a couple of hours to provide a warm welcome and some knowledge of the church?

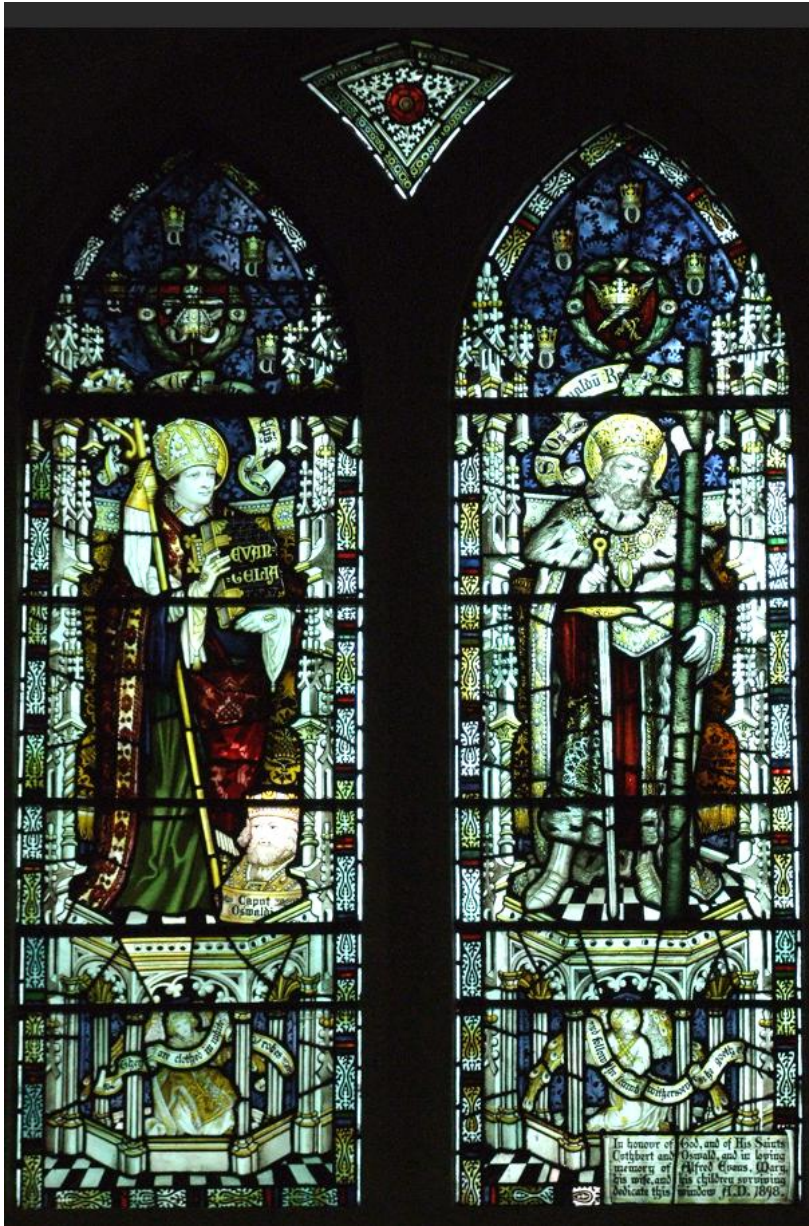
'Help yourself' tea & coffee provided.

Pentecost at St Michael's



THE WINDOW DEDICATED TO ST. CUTHBERT AND ST. OSWALD

This month I thought we would start to look at the window in the north aisle starting off with the one depicting St. Cuthbert and St. Oswald .



St Cuthbert (circa 634 - 20th March 687) is dressed as a Bishop and holds a crozier and a book “Evangelia” (Greek for gospel) . This may represent the famous “Lindisfarne Gospel” said to have been written for when he was venerated 11 years after his death.

He served as Bishop of Lindisfarne (off the coast of Northumberland) in the 7th century. Before becoming a Bishop, he was a highly revered Anglo-Saxon monk and hermit. Following his death his body was moved to various locations but was eventually buried behind the high altar in Durham Cathedral.

St Oswald was (604-642) was King Of Northumbria and united his Kingdom, converted his people to Christianity by bringing Irish Monks from Iona to Lindisfarne.

He died in battle in 642 at Maserfield (now Oswestry) fighting against Penda, the pagan King of Mercia. (Penda was the father of Wulfhere and therefore grandfather of Rufin and Wulfad).

Oswald’s head was severed from his body and taken by monks to Lindisfarne and later was placed inside the coffin of Cuthbert to protect it from Viking raids. Hence his head is depicted by St. Cuthbert’s feet in the window.

The inscription on the window reads: In honour of God, and of His Saints Cuthbert and Oswald, and in loving memory of Alfred Evans, Mary his wife, and his children surviving dedicate this window A.D. 1898”

St James the Least of All

Happily, the Church of England still retains some singular parish clergy. Take the parish of St James-the-Least in the county of C- for example. Here the elderly Anglo-Catholic vicar, Eustace, continues his correspondence to Darren, his nephew, a low-church curate recently ordained... by the Revd Dr Gary Bowness



Our war between parishes

The Rectory

St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

So, now you have enjoyed your first Summer Fete. Don't say I didn't warn you. It may be small consolation but remember that they only happen once a year - although in your case, you still have another 30 to endure before retirement.

I negotiated our own last week. As usual, the band from our neighbouring parish of St Eusebius played. There has been much bad blood in the past between our two villages. The trouble started on the day that St James the Least of All never told St Eusebius that the Vikings were coming up the river. We may have long since buried the hatchet, but both sides remember where they put it.

Tension between the two communities down the centuries has moved on from occasional slaughter to something a little more refined. Just as I began my opening speech to crown the Rose Queen, the band struck up with the National Anthem. When the hog roast started, they played "smoke gets in your eyes" and when it came to the necessary music for the maypole dancing, they all disappeared into the beer tent.

With great Christian charity, we shall bide our time. In September we have the annual football match between the two churches' Servers. Last year, in addition to winning the match, the St James' boys sent three of their side off with concussion. Naturally, I visited them in hospital.

Miss Prendergast, as always, played Gypsy Rose Lee. If the tall, dark, dear lady tells me one more time that I am about to find romance with a tall dark lady, while she

flutters her eyelashes at me, I swear I shall throttle her with a bell rope. Besides, I already have a beautiful dark lady in my life - and my Labrador is devoted to me.

The only real hiccough came when I bought 12 packets of fudge from Mrs Masheder to present to our choirboys. Yet again, she had misread salt for sugar in the recipe. After I presented the packets at Mattins the following day, a formal complaint was rapidly made by a parent to the police that the Rector was attempting to poison their son. But as I explained to the officer, if I had intended to poison anyone, I would have done it far more discreetly - and infinitely more efficiently.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Time to smile

Hymns for professionals

Dentist: Crown Him with many crowns.

Contractor: The church's one foundation

Obstetrician: Come, labour on.

Golfer: There is a green hill far away.

Politician: Standing on the promises.

Librarian: Let all mortal flesh keep silence.

Barrister: In the hour of trial.

Dry Cleaner: O for a faith that will not shrink.

Census taker: All people that on earth do dwell.

Tax officer: We give thee but thine own.

Traffic patrol: Where cross the crowded ways of life.

Credit card user: A charge to keep have I.

Readings for July 26

Date	Old Testament	Psalm	Epistle
5 th July	Zechariah 9 vv9-12	Psalm 145 vv8-15	Romans 7 vv15-25a
12 th July	Isaiah 55 vv 10-13	Psalm 65 vv1-8, 9-14	Romans 8 vv1-11
19 th July	Isaiah 44 vv6-8	Psalm 86 vv11-17	Romans 8 vv12-25
26 th July	1 Kings 3 vv5-12	Psalm 119 vv129-136	Romans 8 vv26-39

Intercessions Rota for July 26

Date	St Michael & St Wulfad 8.00am	St Michael & St Wulfad 11.00am	St Saviour 9.15am
5 th July	Mr R Davies	Mr F Bramham	Mary Babb
12 th July	Mr P Evans	Civic Service	Sue Gamble
19 th July	Mr T Knowles	Mr P Evans	Clergy
26 th July	Mr R Davies	Clergy	Mary Babb

Readers Rota for July 26

Date	St Michael & St Wulfad 8.00am	St Saviour 9.15am	St Michael & St Wulfad 11.00am
5 th July	Mr R Davis	Mary Babb	Mrs S Coles Mr W Coles
12 th July	Mr T Knowles	Martin Bishop	Civic Sunday
19 th July	Mrs J Burton	Jane Capey	Mrs C Connolly Mrs P Wyatt
26 th July	Mrs P Norvall	Erica Pinfold	Mr P Baddeley Mr K Jones

Readings for August 26

Date	Old Testament	Psalm	Epistle
2 nd August	Isaiah 55 vv1-5	Psalm 145 vv8-9, 15-23	Matthew 14 vv13-21
9 th August	1 Kings 19 vv9-18	Psalm 85 vv8-13	Romans 10 vv5-15
16 th August	Isaiah 56 vv1,6-8	Psalm 67	Romans 11 vv1-2a,29-32
23 rd August	Isaiah 51 vv1-6	Psalm 138	Romans 12 vv1-8
30 th August	Jeremiah 15 vv15-21	Psalm 26 vv1-8	Romans 12 vv9-21

Intercessions Rota for August 26

Date	St Michael & St Wulfad 8.00am	St Michael & St Wulfad 11.00am	St Saviour 9.15am
2 nd August	Mr T Knowles	Mrs N Abbott	Bryan Fletcher
9 th August	Mr R Davies	Mrs C Carnes	Sue Gamble
16 th August	Mr P Evans	Clergy	Clergy
23 rd August	Mr T Knowles	Mr R Davies	Mary Babb
30 th August	Mr R Davies	Mrs M Moss	Clergy

Readers Rota for August 26

Date	St Michael & St Wulfad 8.00am	St Saviour 9.15am	St Michael & St Wulfad 11.00am
2 nd August	Mr R Davies	Jim Davies	Mr J Baddeley Mr R Davies
9 th August	Mr T Knowles	Derek Cartledge	Mrs N Abbott Mrs C Carnes
16 th August	Mrs J Burton	Wyn Griffiths	Mrs H Izadpanah Mrs G Sanders
23 rd August	Mrs P Norvall	David Thompson	Mrs M Moss Mr R Moss
30 th August	Mr R Davies	Kathleen Lanyon	Mr W Coles Mrs S Coles

Contact Numbers

Rector	Rev'd Robert Icke	01785 556898
Reader	Dennis Abbott	01785 814134
 Churchwardens		
St Michael & St Wulfad	Nichola Abbott	01785 814134
	Paul Evans	07976 611543
 St Saviour		
	Kathleen Lanyon	01785 814065
	Mary Babb	01785 812921
 Treasurers		
St Michael & St Wulfad's PCC	John Baddeley	01785 860296
St Saviour's PCC	Paul Gerrard	01785 818363
 Organist St Saviour	John Hammersley	01785 817216
 Sacristan St Michael & St Wulfad	Alan Warrilow	01785 816771
Bell Ringers St Michael & St Wulfad	Peter Burgess (Tower Captain)	07921 944841
 Sunday School, CU@4 and Collage Café Parish Magazine	Jill Bramham Fred Bramham towerandspiremagazine@gmail.com	07491 311832
 St Michael's Community Hall Aston Village Hall Weddings and Baptisms	Dennis Abbott Contact: astonbystonevillagehall@gmail.com Nichola Abbott	01785 814134 01785 814134
 Benefice Church website St Michael's CE (VC) First School Weavers Lane, Stone ST15 8QB	www.stmichaelschurchstone.co.uk Headteacher Mrs J Wass	01785 334930
 Safeguarding		
St Michael & St Wulfad	Nichola Abbott	01785 814134
St Saviour	Mrs Lucinda Wright	07507 908190