



Dear Friends

### **Harborne Food Assembly**

We are hoping that in July the Harborne Food Assembly will be opening in our hall.

The Food Assembly brings together people to buy fresh food directly from local farmers and foodmakers.

The local people running the assembly give technology and support so that everyone gets a better deal: communities get to know each other, farmers get a fairer price for their work, and customers get locally sourced, unique produce: the most delicious food available!

Selling through The Food Assembly, farmers and foodmakers get over 80% for every product sold, compared to the 15%-25% that most supermarkets offer them.

Three important facts about The Food Assembly:

1. All the food is produced within 150 miles from where you live
2. Producers set their own price; meaning that they are paid fairly for their work
3. The Food Assembly doesn't act as a middleman, but as a service provider

We will simply be providing the venue for this enterprise but hope that as time goes on we can develop the link well. For example, if they hold a tasting evening, it might be possible for a small team to make teas and coffees, we could be making contacts with the people who come to the hall and serving them whilst getting to know some local people better.

Food is so much at the heart of the gospel with the central act of our worship being based on a meal and many gospel incidents happening in the context of food.

Whether it is the Foodbank or the Food Assembly we recognise the place of food in society and in faith.

you can find out more about the assembly at <https://thefoodassembly.com/en>  
Do watch for this development and join if you can.

**Priscilla**

## Aspects of life at St Faith and St Laurence

**Morning prayer** – is normally said Monday to Thursday and Saturday at 8.15 am in the Lady Chapel. We use Common Worship Daily Prayer, all are welcome to come and join in.

**Reflections** A chance to meet together over a cuppa and reflect on the Gospel reading for the previous Sunday. A group meets on Mondays from 1.45-3pm Venues are listed in the Programme of the month.

**Task Groups** – The church has a number of task groups enabling areas of church life. These are listed in the magazine with the contact details of the chairs. If you would like to be a part of a groups please contact the relevant chair or Priscilla. All are welcome to join.

**Stay and Play** meets on Thursday between 9.30 and 11am in the Hall to give a chance for people with young children to meet and the children to play. All are welcome. Cost £1.50 per family.

**Sunday Club** meets on the first and third Sundays of each month except during the holidays. We hold an extra Sunday Club on days when there is a baptism. All are welcome to join in hearing and experiencing a Bible Story and learning together about what it means for our daily lives.

**Messy Church** takes place on the first Saturday of each month, most months. A chance for children and parents/ carers to have an informal time of worship, and discovering about a Bible story through song, craft, listening, cooking and so much more. Dates are published in advance and all are welcome to come along.

**Planned Giving** helps people make giving regular. You decide how much you can afford to give. You can join the envelope scheme weekly or monthly or pay by Standing Order or annually by cheque. Income tax payers are asked to Gift Aid their giving, so the Church can reclaim the tax on their donations at no extra cost to the donors. For details, contact Jackie Taylor or Brenda Stott

**Call in for Coffee** time together over a cuppa on a Wednesday morning from 10.30 -12.00. if needed we can arrange for someone to collect you and then take you home. Please ring Pauline Sitford (427 7005). If you are passing, do call in, or bring a friend, all are welcome.

We support **Recycling**. We have a special collection on the first Sunday of every month when we collect ALUMINIUM cans and foil which can be sold and the money raised is donated to our Mission Partners in Chile (through USPG) We also have envelopes for recycling mobile phones again supporting USPG. Pauline Sitford (427 7005).

**Please note that we no longer collect batteries and printer ink cartridges.**

## In reality he's an acting Pope!

Pope Francis can now add 'actor' to his CV. He has a cameo and plays himself in a new religious-themed feature film called *Beyond The Sun*. It's about four young children from different cultures trying to follow the teachings of Christ. The project launched at the Cannes Film Festival on the 17 May. The producers said this is the first time in the history of the Roman Catholic Church that a Pope has agreed to play a cameo role in a film. They also said Francis is inspired by the move. He reportedly asked producers to make a movie with the purpose of communicating the message of the Gospels to youth. The company which made the film, told The Telegraph: "Our excitement and gratitude toward His Holiness, Pope Francis, participating in this film is beyond words. This is not just a movie for us, it's a message, and who better to have on your side to deliver an important societal and spiritual message than the Pope. We are honoured and inspired by the level of collaboration from the Vatican." Profits from the film will be donated to two charities in Argentina that help disadvantaged children.

## From a distance

Most of us at some time every week see an old church from a distance. The tower, spire or pinnacles reach up as if to an unattainable heaven. And it is easy to imagine that's how God watches us – as the song says, '*From a Distance*'. He seems far away, and it's comforting to know that he is there but not close enough to affect our life unless we whisper to him during tough times.

Yet when we come close to a church, we may see it warts and all – the patched stonework, the cracked paving, the marks of earlier structures. Then when we go inside we may discover it is warm and alive, with positive people inspired to worship and to do good things in the world. They too, like all of us, often look good from a distance, yet close up we see their weaknesses and failings.

But hang on! In that visit you have just discovered the workings of the Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. First, there is ancient Almighty God, high and lifted up, righteous and awe-full, seemingly watching us from a distance. Then comes the Son, Jesus Christ, warm and alive, down at our human level but leaving it again at Easter to make, via his empty Cross, a bridge between repentant people and awesome Almighty God.

And finally, the inspirational person of God the Holy Spirit, doing two things. First, whispering in the minds and consciences of those outside the faith to consider, to trust, to kneel and to turn. Then secondly, living in believers' hearts, prompting them to find joy in worship and in service. Next time you see a church *from a distance*, hum that song and listen for the whisper of the Spirit!

Colin Reeves

## Important Notice –but when do we tell you?

“Then the Curate shall declare unto the people what Holy-days, or Fasting -days, are in the week following to be observed. And then also (if occasion be) shall notice be given of the Communion; and Briefs, Citations, and Excommunications read. And nothing shall be proclaimed or published in the Church during the time of Divine Service, but by the Minister...”

“Are there any notices?” the minister asks after welcoming everyone to the service, and sometimes someone shyly explains that the Tuesday meeting is now on Wednesday of this week, and the Wednesday meeting is now on Monday and...oh well.. it is all on the notice sheet. Then another person jumps up to say there is a mistake on the notice sheet!

Ever wonder when this all started? The above quotation is taken from the notes to the Prayer Book service written in the seventeenth century. It is interesting that even then, there were notices to give out.

In those days, Notices could only be announcements of holy days, days of fasting or celebration or what was approved by the bishop or monarch. A “brief” was a letter to a community on a point of discipline and a citation was news of a court case probably a church court case. Notices were for important church or state business only. These were the days before newspapers, so church notices would be the main source of news.

So when is the best time to have them today? If you have them at the beginning of the service, it can be a bit of a let-down, welcoming people to your service of praise and thanksgiving - but don't forget the fish and chip supper next Saturday is at 6 pm not 8pm, in the village hall not the church hall, and also, the flower arranging has been rearranged, and Mrs. Boggins' leg is much better.

Or you can have them at the end, just as some folk are shooting off to see if the roast has burnt (only to find they forgot to put oven on), and everyone is dying for a cup of tea.

Perhaps notices work best in the middle of the service – like a commercial break. It avoids spoiling the welcome, and yet gets them in while people are still interested.

Perhaps you can prepare a notice about it?



**Home Communion** We have a team of lay people trained and able to bring Home Communion usually on a monthly basis. This is for those who are unable to come to church long term. If the situation is more temporary for example after an operation you can also receive communion, usually from Priscilla. In either case please contact Priscilla.

### Traidcraft

Traidcraft sells a range of fairly traded food, cards, clothes and accessories. We use Traidcraft tea and coffee and everything we buy helps fight poverty and supports our church. You can order seasonal gifts through the church at Christmas time when catalogues will be available. Any questions, please ask Ruth Jeavons or Bronwen Jones.

### 'easyfundraising'

Next time you shop online, think of St Faith and St Laurence and raise free donations with 3,000+ retailers:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stfaithandstlaurence>

**Gridiron Club** is a friendship group for men and women. It meets monthly, usually on the third Tuesday, at 7.30 pm in the Committee Room. There are talks, outings and social events which are open to all.

**Women's Fellowship** meets on the first Monday of the month from March to December. Meetings are held in the Committee Room 7.30 for 8pm. We have talks on a variety of subjects. See Programme of the Month for details.

### Prayer Ministry Team

Prayer ministry is offered during the 10am Communion on Sundays. People can receive prayer for themselves or for any situation that is important to them. It takes place in the Lady Chapel during the distribution of communion.

### Service with no name

This takes place on the first Thursday in the month in church at 7.30pm.

### Foodbank

We collect food for the Quinton and Oldbury Foodbank. There is a box in church and food can be placed there at any time. The list of things that are needed is in church and in the hall. Food is distributed from St Boniface Church on Wednesdays and Paul and Barney's place on Fridays. Vouchers are required to receive food.

### Choir and Music.

Choir Practice takes place weekly, normally on Thursdays 6-7pm. Anyone interested in singing in the choir should contact Simon Palmer, Organist & Choirmaster. (Contact details on page cover) We also like to encourage instrumentalists to perform in church, either in services or in concerts.

## General Synod

General Synod meets in York from 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> July. There is a great deal of business due to be transacted, with some particularly interesting motions, reports and papers. All the papers can be accessed via the Church of England website [www.cofe.anglican.org/](http://www.cofe.anglican.org/). The timetable for the synod is here, this is all prepared and grounded in worship which takes place throughout the days

### Friday 7 July 2.30 pm – 7.00 pm

Opening worship Introduction and welcomes Response on behalf of ecumenical guests.

Report by the Business Committee

Legislative Business Amending Canon No. 36 – Final Drafting.

Approval of appointment to the Archbishops' Council.

The Archbishops' Council Audit Committee Annual Report.

Church Commissioners Annual Report Presentation under Standing Order 107 followed by Q&A.

Questions

### Saturday 8 July 9.00 am – 12.30 pm

Presentation from the House of Bishops on the Proposals for the Pastoral Advisory Group on Human Sexuality and the development of the Teaching Document.

Presentation under S.O. 107 followed by Q&A

Report from the Mission and Public Affairs Council on the Presence and Engagement Interfaith programme

Legislative Reform Measure – Final Drafting / Final Approval

Statute Law (Repeals) Measure – Final Drafting/Final Approval

Pensions (Pre-consolidation) Measure – Final Drafting / Final Approval

Introductory Session: National Support for Local Churches Presentation under Standing Order 107

### Synod members meet in groups from 2.30 pm – 4.00 pm

Workshops on Forms of National Support for Local Churches

### 4.30 pm – 7.00 pm

Report from the Archbishops' Council on National Support for Local Churches  
Private Member's Motion Conversion Therapy

### Sunday 9 July 2.30 pm – 7.00 pm

Diocesan Synod Motion Welcoming Transgender People

Interim Report on the Review of the Crown Nominations Commission Presentation followed by Q&A

Report from the House of Clergy on a Covenant for Clergy Wellbeing

EITHER Meetings of the House of Laity and Convocations from 5.45-7.00 pm [including evening worship]

OR Private Member's Motion Schools Admissions Code

## You didn't do the green thing!

*(Readers of a certain age may like this.)*

The girl on the checkout suggested to the older lady that she should bring her own shopping bags in future because their plastic bags weren't good for the environment. The lady apologised and said "We didn't have this green thing in my day." The girl responded, "That's our problem today. Your generation didn't care enough to save the environment for future generations." The lady reflected on this when she got home and put pen to paper, using the title "Did we have the green thing in my day?" These are her thoughts.

Back then, we returned milk bottles so that they could be washed, sterilized, refilled and recycled. Didn't have the green thing back in our day? We walked up stairs, because we didn't have an escalator in every store and office building. We walked to the shops and didn't use a car every time we had to make a short journey. And we didn't have the green thing in our day?

We washed the baby's nappies because we didn't have the throw-away kind. We used a washing line and relied on wind and solar power to dry our clothes, not an energy-gobbling spin drier. And our children wore things passed down the line because they didn't get brand new clothes at the drop of a hat. We didn't have the green thing back in our day?

Back then, we had a small TV or radio in the house, not a TV in every room, half the size of the wall. In the kitchen, we stirred by hand because we didn't have electric machines to do every simple task. We didn't use a petrol mower in the garden; we used a push mower, which helped to keep us fit. We didn't need to go to a health club to run on electrically-operated treadmills. We didn't have the green thing back then!

We drank water from a tap, not from plastic bottles. We refilled pens with ink instead of buying a new one each time it ran dry. We replaced razor blades instead of throwing away the whole razor when it got blunt. But we didn't have the green thing back then.

We used the bus to get around. The children walked to school, or rode their bikes. They didn't expect mum to be a taxi driver. We had one electrical outlet in a room, not three on each wall to provide power for a host of gadgets. And we didn't need an i-phone to receive a signal beamed from a satellite to order a pizza.

And did that girl say our generation didn't care enough about the environment?

### Keep it short

The vicar stood up and said: "Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. You'll be glad to know that when I asked my secretary to type this sermon out for me, I asked her to eliminate any thing that was dull or confusing. So in conclusion...."



**Funerals in Church**

5<sup>th</sup> June                      Roberta Holland (Bobbie)  
 21<sup>st</sup> June                     Rose Lillian Mallett

**FACTS AND FIGURES**

Week Beginning	Communicants	Loose Plate £	Planned Giving £	Gift Aid £
May 21	71	71.39	263.30	21.00
May 28	131	183.76	308.00	66.00
June 4	65	46.01	392.55	15.00
June 11	34	75.30	234.50	77.00
<b>Standing Orders</b>			<b>1670.00</b>	<b>21.42</b>

**Plane prayers**

Do you ever feel nervous before getting on a plane? Travellers at one German airport can now have some peace by entering a booth and listening to a prayer of their choice before boarding a plane. A terminal at Stuttgart Airport's has a new prayer booth. There are 300 prayers from various religions in 65 different languages available. An airport spokesman said, "Often, passengers have a bit of time before their departure at the gate and the prayer booth is an offer by the airport's chaplains to provide a moment of contemplation." The former photo booth includes the Christian Lord's Prayer and American TV preachers on the touch-screen display.

The booth is free of charge and will be available initially for three months at one of the boarding areas.

**Monday 10 July 9.00 am – 12.30 pm**

Diocesan Synod Motion Cost of Applying for Citizenship  
 Report from the Elections Review Group  
 Presentation from the Elections Review Group Presentation under S.O. 107 followed by Q&A  
 Legislative Business (ctd ...) Amending Canon No. 36 – Final Approval

**2.30 pm – 5.00 pm**

Archbishops' Council's Annual Report 2016 Presentation under S.O. 106 followed by Q&A  
 Archbishops' Council's Budget for 2018  
 Amending Canon No. 37 – Final Approval

**Contingency Business**

Private Members' Motion: Schools Admission Code/ Diocesan Synod Motion: Food wastage / Deemed Items  
 Report from the Standing Orders Committee on the amendments to the Standing Orders required in connection with the Legislative Reform Measure and other matters / Pensions (Consolidation) Measure / Miscellaneous Provisions Measure / Payments to the CCT Order / Fees Orders

Of particular note are various items around sexuality, following up the report discussed and not taken note of at the last synod. These include a motion on the welcome of transgender persons and one on what is known as "Gay conversion therapy"

Another significant item is the motion on the cost of citizenship which originated from a motion from Central Deanery in Birmingham. Diocesan Synod passed this overwhelmingly and it is a strong example of the way in which the synodical process works at its best.

Although i haven't yet read all the papers, another thing i expect to be very important is the extent to which the national church can support local churches in their ministry and mission.

If you are interested you can follow the live feed from synod through the website. if you are very lucky, you might even hear me speak if I get called!!!

If you want to know any more please do ask and I shall attempt to answer.

**Priscilla**

## Quinborne Open Day

The Quinborne centre is holding an open day on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> July from 10-3. We have been invited as a local group to have a stand at which we can have a couple of people there to chat with people, give out magazines and talk about what we do. This is an opportunity to reach out into the community in a non-threatening way and meet new people. Please think whether you can offer some time for this as Priscilla is away at synod so can't be there to help. All offers welcome.

## Faith and Learning

This month Faith and Learning will pick up on the theme of the Anniversary of the church by looking at the church and its history. Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> July 7.30pm in the Lady Chapel.

## Gita Morse.

Just a year ago, Gita came to join us as part of the Ministry team. The idea was to enable her to finish her curacy by spending her fourth year in a different context that enabled her to have some of the experiences and do some of the things she had thus far not covered. It is good to be able to say that she has completed those things and has been signed off from her curacy. As yet the future pattern of her ministry is unclear, but she will be taking some time to reflect on that and to have a well-earned rest. Her last Sunday with us will be July 16<sup>th</sup> and we will be able to say Goodbye to her after the 10am service. Please do come and support her in this.



A big "Thank You" to all who helped with this year's Christian Aid Week collection and events to raise money for same.

A total of £1762.19 was collected from personal donations/house to house collections; £250.41 from the Pancake Party and £35 from Call in for Coffee. This makes a grand total of £2049.60. A similar figure to last year.

**Judith and Geoff Bennett**

## Marking time

Much of the year on our island is damp and gloomy; warmth and sunshine are an exciting novelty. When summer comes, it brings about a pleasant kind of national madness: it is the silly season. We endure traffic queues to get to our beaches, obsess about our gardens, and relish the chance to leave our layers firmly in the wardrobe. Summer is a time for healthy disengagement from some of life's routine, as schools and parliament go into recess and the long evenings alter our internal clock.

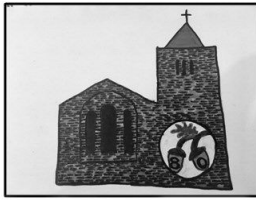
The haziness of summer can seem to have parallel in the cycle of the Church's year. After Trinity Sunday, we move into 'Ordinary Time', which marches far into the distance, until the year begins again in Advent. We can lose count of the weeks, as the 'teens' after Trinity melt into one long, drowsy stretch. But counting is the essence of these weeks: 'Ordinary' Time doesn't mean mundane time, but time which is counted, in order, from beginning to end. This is different from the two, almost equally long, periods of the liturgical year, which focus on the events of Christ's life. Advent to Epiphany concentrates on his coming and infancy; Ash Wednesday to Pentecost pivots on his death and resurrection. But in Ordinary Time there is no overarching focus, no festive high or solemn low. Instead we must count, and mark the time from start to finish.

Marking time sounds dull, something we could easily disengage from; but it is vitally important. We need to remind ourselves of the value of each present moment, which is a gift from God waiting to be filled with our free response of praise and love. Keeping an eye on the longer span ahead raises the possibility of plans and projects. For each of us, Ordinary Time invites a gradual, consistent and deep engagement in something that will be good news to us and others. That might be through spiritual reading, or going on a retreat; in giving time and effort to church and community in a new way, or by investing in relationships more consciously and attentively. The possibilities are many. Summer disengagement beckons us into the richer engagement of Ordinary Time, through which God may work something extraordinary in us.

*Dominic Keech (Vicar of St. Nicholas, Brighton)*

## A SUMMER BLESSING

May we walk with God this summer, in whatever we do, wherever we go.  
Walking with God means walking with honesty and with courage,  
walking with love and respect, and concern for the feelings of others.  
May we talk to God this summer, every day and in every situation.  
Talking with God means praying words of praise for the beauty of creation,  
saying prayers of thanks for friends and good times, asking God's help in all  
our decisions, expressing sorrow when we have failed.  
May we talk with God each and every day. Amen



What a fantastic day it was on Saturday June 10th. A special thanks must go to the flower arrangers - wonderful decorations in church. The pillars were really well done by various people and groups, and last but not least thanks to everyone who prepared and helped on the stalls and activities, in the kitchen and the organising committee. Together you made the day very special.

### **Bronwen and Malcolm (Churchwardens)**

### **FUN DAY AND BARBECUE**

The Socials Task Group would like to thank and congratulate all those who helped in any way to make the Fun Day and Barbecue on 10th June such a good day.

Special mention must be given to those who created the decade displays at the pillars and in the Children's Corner in the Church, namely Jack Evans, Caroline Marshall, the Scout Group, Guides and Brownies, Chris Terry and the Children's Ministry team. Also to Celia, Anita, Julia, Brenda and Helen for the beautiful flower arrangements. Then the day was further enhanced with the music of James, Nick and Liz Griffiths with John Barber in the afternoon.

There was a lovely atmosphere in the Hall where there were books, cakes, cards, crafts, jewellery and plants for sale and 2 tombolas where prizes were won.

The Bouncy Castle and Obstacle Course in the grounds, together with the games and Treasure Hunt were enjoyed by many, young and maybe 'not quite so young' (despite the cool weather). The barbecue outside the hall and other refreshments in the committee room made for a great day all round. Without all you willing helpers events like these wouldn't happen so, once again, thank you all.

### **Socials Task Group.**

## **Prayer of the month God's Will, Not Mine!**

Jesus would often slip away to the wilderness and pray in order to get away from His busy world and ministry and spent many nights in prayer with his heavenly Father.

Although, He was the Son of God, one with the Father, He laid aside His divinity and became human, like us, and learnt obedience and dependence on His Father.

Jesus said, "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me" (John 6:38, NIV).

When Jesus taught the disciples, the Lord's Prayer, he taught them to pray for God's rule and reign in their lives: "thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10, NIV).

Often, at particular times in our lives, we cry out to God and ask what is your will Lord?

This is my prayer, as I finish my curacy at St Faith and St Laurence and I ask God, my Father, what and where do you want me to go and do, but more importantly, what do you want me to learn and be as I wait for the next leg of my journey?

Maybe, you are in that position of needing to know God's will also; here is a prayer for us. This prayer, is in a form of a hymn, by Horatius Bonar

Thy way, not mine, O Lord, however dark it be!  
Lead me by thy own hand; choose out the path for me.  
I dare not choose my lot, I would not if I might,  
choose thou for me, my God, so shall I walk aright.  
Not mine, not mine the choice in things both great and small,  
be thou my guide, my strength, my wisdom and my all.

I finish with the prayer of David, for each one of us:

"Teach me to do your will, for you are my God.

Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground". (Psalm 143: 10)

And, may I say, "I thank my God every time I remember you".

Thank you for your love and support. **Gita**

### **Service with no Name – Thursday July 6th at 7.30pm**

This month it has a name-Martin Luther. Come and hear the story of the man who, 500 years ago changed the world. In 1517 an Augustinian Friar from Germany set off a series of events that would transform the Christian church in the west and would become known as the Reformation. Five hundred years later, we recognise that all our churches and denominations grew out of those events, even the Roman Catholic Church which experienced its own reformation in response to the challenge from the Protestants.

## When we sing together, we're not alone.

As part of my recent Martin Luther Pilgrimage, we visited the city of Leipzig where Martin Luther preached to large crowds in the famous St Thomas Church. This was also the church where J.S. Bach was Kapellmeister for 27 years.

Luther became known in particular for three things: the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, the belief that Scripture should be translated into the people's language, and the birth of congregational singing. He felt that music was of God, not of man. He was determined to restore congregational singing in the German language to the Church. So strong were his beliefs about music and worship that he wrote these fiery words: "Next to the word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world. It controls our hearts, minds and spirits". His passionate beliefs led Luther to write both words and music for several hymns, including "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." Luther's first hymnal was published in 1524. It contained eight hymns, four written by himself. Later hymnals were also published for congregational use. He urged people to use the hymns at home and encouraged parochial schools to teach them to their students. Working with skilled musicians, Luther also created new music for church choirs, organ, and other instruments during his life. After his death in 1546, the first line of his most well-known hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" was inscribed on his tomb.

The sound of voices emanating from the terraces on a Saturday afternoon is so normal to us now, that it's hard to believe that this kind of spontaneous group singing was ever frowned on. But believe it or not, communal singing was once a radical, revolutionary practice that brought religion and politics together with an almighty crash.

To understand why, we need to travel back in time. It was in 16th-century Germany that Martin Luther – composer, theologian, priest and a seminal figure in the Protestant Reformation – realised that singing together is about a lot more than just making music. When we sing, we're expressing identity, spirituality and solidarity, whether it's in a church or the football stand.

This was demonstrated recently, when the French and English supporters joined together before the game in Paris, in singing the Oasis song, '*Don't look back in anger*' in tribute to the victims of the attacks in Manchester and London.

Most people who sing in public with large groups of like-minded people aren't members of choirs – they're football or rugby fans. These songs or chants have a long and illustrious pedigree in the UK, where there are records of chants dating back to the 1920s. But the origins of this form of expression can be dated to much earlier, with Luther, his songs and reforms.

## Nearest and Dearest

At a time when we may be feeling, as a nation, a bit isolated and unloved, we should search for friends and relatives.

We could go and find a people who:

Name their homeland the same as we do ours.

Have more churches dedicated to saints from the British Isles than we have.

Are not too sure about Europe or Germany and don't much like the French.

A place where King Arthur is said to have lived and his legends are national history.

A nation of rebellious sea-loving folk who have a native language understandable by Welsh and Gaelic speakers.

Our ancient trading partners who, like us, have many blue-eyed residents.

Their country was called Armorique until so many refugees arrived from Britain that they changed its name to Bretagne (Brittany) and, to be clear which was why they called our islands Grand Bretagne (Great Britain). They are Breton. We are British.

It is obvious that, in ancient times, it was easier to get from the West of the British Isles to Brittany than to get to the East of Britain. So, when the Saxons and Vikings invaded Britain, the refugee British went by boat to Brittany for safety. They have the beautiful Mont St. Michel as we have St. Michaels Mount in Cornwall. Their most famous saints Cado, Gildas, Coal, Samson, Renon (Ronan), Briec (Brioc), Pol de Leon (Paul Aurilian), Colomban, all of these were born in our islands. Their church has the same roots as ours.

Their original Christian groups eventually came under the influence of the Pope in Rome. Our English church made the same move, in our case through St. Augustine at Canterbury. The Breton church retains that feeling of a bit of independence inside the Roman Catholic system. We eventually went further and formally separated from Rome under Henry VIII. It is not surprising that they feel a great affinity with us. Nice to have friends just across the sea!

*David Alexander*



DRAPÉAU BRETON



## COVER STORY

This month's cover is of St Michael of the Rock, Brentor in Devon. If you are able to visit the area, enjoy the magnificent sight of the church from below before losing yourself completely in the wonderful atmosphere of serenity within.

St Michael's is England's highest church. The views from it are arguably the widest and most spectacular from any churchyard in England. The view from beneath the lofty tor on which this little church stands, is one that inspires awe and, when the scene is sheathed in fog, perhaps something close to dread too, for this is Dartmoor at its eerie best. The exaggerated squeak of the gate that guards the porch, the clang of the church door as it closes behind you and the feeble guttering light emitted by the gas lamps only add to the drama. The west front is just 3ft from the edge of a cliff and its crenellated tower - struck by lightning in 1994 - is 32ft high and towers over the land below. It is no wonder that this is a church beset by legends in which the devil plays a central role.

The church, also known as St Michael de Rupe, was built around 1130 by Robert Giffard, Lord of the Manor of Lamerton and Whitchurch. It may well have served initially as a chantry - a place where a member of the clergy would be paid to celebrate masses for the founder's soul.

The building is 1,150ft above sea level and constructed on the summit of a section of a volcanic cone. The site was an important one long before Giffard's time though, as the remains of an Iron Age hill-fort surrounding the tor demonstrate. Furthermore, during church restoration works carried out in 1889 by the 9th Duke of Bedford, 40 skeletons were discovered beneath the floor. Interestingly, only one was laid east to west, as one might expect in a Christian burial. All the others were laid north to south, as is more customary in pagan rites.

The dedication to St Michael is common among churches found in high places, on account of the heights traditionally inhabited by angels, who count the saint as their captain. Given the highly exposed nature of the summit, it is unsurprising to learn that there are plans afoot to replace the roof, which itself only goes back to Victorian days and is very flat-pitched. When an examination of the roof beams took place, an unexpected discovery was made. Graffiti from the times of both World Wars was found.

Men had carved their names into the wood prior to going off to fight, presumably in a bid to leave something of themselves behind in case they never returned. Most of the names date from 1916-18 or 1943-55 and some are written in flawless copperplate font.

There are still services held at St Michael's in the summer. It is a steep climb to get there, even for the casual visitor, but how much more so for the bride at her wedding, the mother carrying her baby to be christened or the coffin bearers at a funeral. Their reward is a matchless view and an unforgettable experience.

Finally, if you attend the very atmospheric Christmas Day carol service and there's snow about, do take your sledge. By tradition, after the service, the congregation are encouraged to slide back down the tor!

It's not as flippant as it seems to compare one of Luther's hymns with "You'll Never Walk Alone", the Rodgers and Hammerstein song from *Carousel* adopted by Liverpool football fans. The ritual that the fans go through every time their team plays, has turned that melody and those words into a something much more than a signature tune for a football club.

In the musical, "You'll Never Walk Alone" acts as a bridge between heaven and earth after the suicide of one of the main characters. But the tune is about much, much more than that on the terraces. Since the early 1960s, when Liverpool adopted it as their sonic mascot, it has acquired more memories and meanings with every rendition. As well as being a symbol of the fans' collective identity, it's a hymn to comrades lost in the 1989 Hillsborough tragedy.

Every time Liverpool fans sing "You'll Never Walk Alone", they perform their solidarity with each other as fans and create a memorial bridge to lost friends and families. It also creates a sense of non-partisan fellowship that anyone in the stadium or watching at home can feel part of. It's an un-conducted, uncoordinated force of nature that has real power.

The song is simultaneously a sound of hope, a lament and a call for togetherness. It may be the closest that football songs get to spiritual experience. Every time it is sung, Liverpool fans enact the revolutionary values of active, engaged and transformational communal singing that Martin Luther mobilised as an essential part of the Reformation in Germany in the 16th century.

So, when did communal singing begin? Among Luther's most revolutionary ideas was his use of music. For him, music was the most important way of communicating the words and deeds of God, and of making people better Christians. Luther's easy-to-learn tunes were mapped on to words that would reveal and inspire religious devotion and imitation.

Above all, these melodies were meant for everyone to sing – not least because they were based on folk tunes and farming work songs as well as Gregorian chant.

These songs could be sung to the accompaniment of a simple guitar, at home or in the pub (and there are pictures of Luther himself doing just that), or in church with an organ. The idea was that by singing these melodies with the rest of your community, you would be brought into the new church by the collective power and experience of song.

Whether it makes us think about football, heaven, a lost loved one or the challenge ahead for our country following the recent General Election, Luther's magic fire still burns with an essential truth: when we sing together, we're not alone.

*Peter Stokes*

## PROGRAMME FOR JULY

Sat	1	10.30 am	Messy Church-The Exodus	Hall
<b>SUN 2</b>	<b>THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b>			
		8.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Jeremiah 28.5-9; Romans 6.12-end; Matthew 10.40-end</i>	
		10.00 am	Family Communion <i>Readings as at 8am</i> FGP Walkabout	
		6.30 pm	Evensong <i>Psalm 50.1-15</i> <i>1 Samuel 28.3-19; Luke 17.20-end</i>	
Mon	3	1.45 pm	Reflections	<i>143, Balden Road</i>
Tue	4	7.15 pm	PCC Meeting	<i>Committee Room</i>
Wed	5	10.30 am	Call in for Coffee	<i>Committee Room</i>
		11.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Genesis 21.5, 8-20; Matthew 8.28-end</i>	<i>Lady Chapel</i>
Thu	6	9.30 am	Stay and Play	<i>Hall</i>
		6.00 pm	Choir Practice	<i>Church</i>
		7.30 pm	Service with no name-Martin Luther	
		7.30 pm	3D Closing Service	<i>Cathedral</i>
Fri	7		General Synod meets in York	
Sat	8	10.00 am-3pm	Quinborne Open Day	
		1.00 pm	Wedding of Alex Robinson and Charlotte Boden	
<b>SUN 9</b>	<b>FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b>			
		8.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Zechariah 9.9-12</i> <i>Romans 7.15-25a; Matthew 11.16-19, 25-end</i>	
		10.00 am	Morning Praise	
		6.30 pm	Sung Eucharist <i>Readings as at 8am</i>	
Mon	10	1.45 pm	Reflections	<i>143, Balden Road</i>
Tue	11	10.30 am	Queen Mother Gardens Service	
		7.30 pm	Churches Together Meeting	
Wed	12	10.30 am	Call in for Coffee	<i>Committee Room</i>
		11.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Genesis 41.55-end, 42.5-7, 17-end; Matthew 10.1-7</i>	<i>Lady Chapel</i>
Thu	13	9.30 am	Stay and Play	<i>Hall</i>
		6.00 pm	Choir Practice	<i>Church</i>

Sat 15 9.30 am Working Party

### SUN 16 FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY-GITA'S LAST SUNDAY

8.00 am Holy Communion *Isaiah 55.10-13; Romans 8.1-11;*  
*Matthew 13.1-9, 18-23*

10.00 am Family Communion *Readings as at 8am*

6.30 pm Evensong *Psalm 60*  
*2 Samuel 7.18-end; Luke 19.41-20.8*

Mon 17 1.45 pm Reflections *143, Balden Road*

Tue 18 2.00 pm William Lench Court Service

Wed 19 10.30 am Call in for Coffee *Committee Room*

11.00 am Holy Communion *Lady Chapel*

*Exodus 3.1-6, 9-12; Matthew 11.25-27*

Thu 20 9.30 am Stay and Play *Hall*

5.30 pm Wedding Celebration Rehearsal

6.00 pm Choir Practice *Church*

### SUN 23 SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

8.00 am Holy Communion *Isaiah 44.6-8;*  
*Romans 8.12-25; Matthew 13.24-30, 36-43*

10.00 am Family Communion  
*Readings as at 8am*

6.30 pm Evensong *Psalm 67*  
*1 Kings 2.10-12, 3.16-end; Acts 4.1-22*

Mon 24 1.45 pm Reflections *143, Balden Road*

Tue 25 7.30 pm Faith and Learning-The History of the Church

Wed 26 10.30 am Call in for Coffee *Committee Room*

11.00 am Holy Communion *Lady Chapel*

*Exodus 16.1-5, 9-15; Matthew 13.1-9*

Thu 27 9.30 am Stay and Play *Hall*

6.00 pm Choir Practice *Church*

### SUN 30 SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

8.00 am Holy Communion *1 Kings 3.5-12;*  
*Romans 8.26-end; Matthew 13.31-33, 44-52*

10.00 am Family Communion  
*Readings as at 8am*

6.30 pm Evensong *Psalm 75*  
*1 Kings 6.11-14, 23-end; Acts 12.1-17*