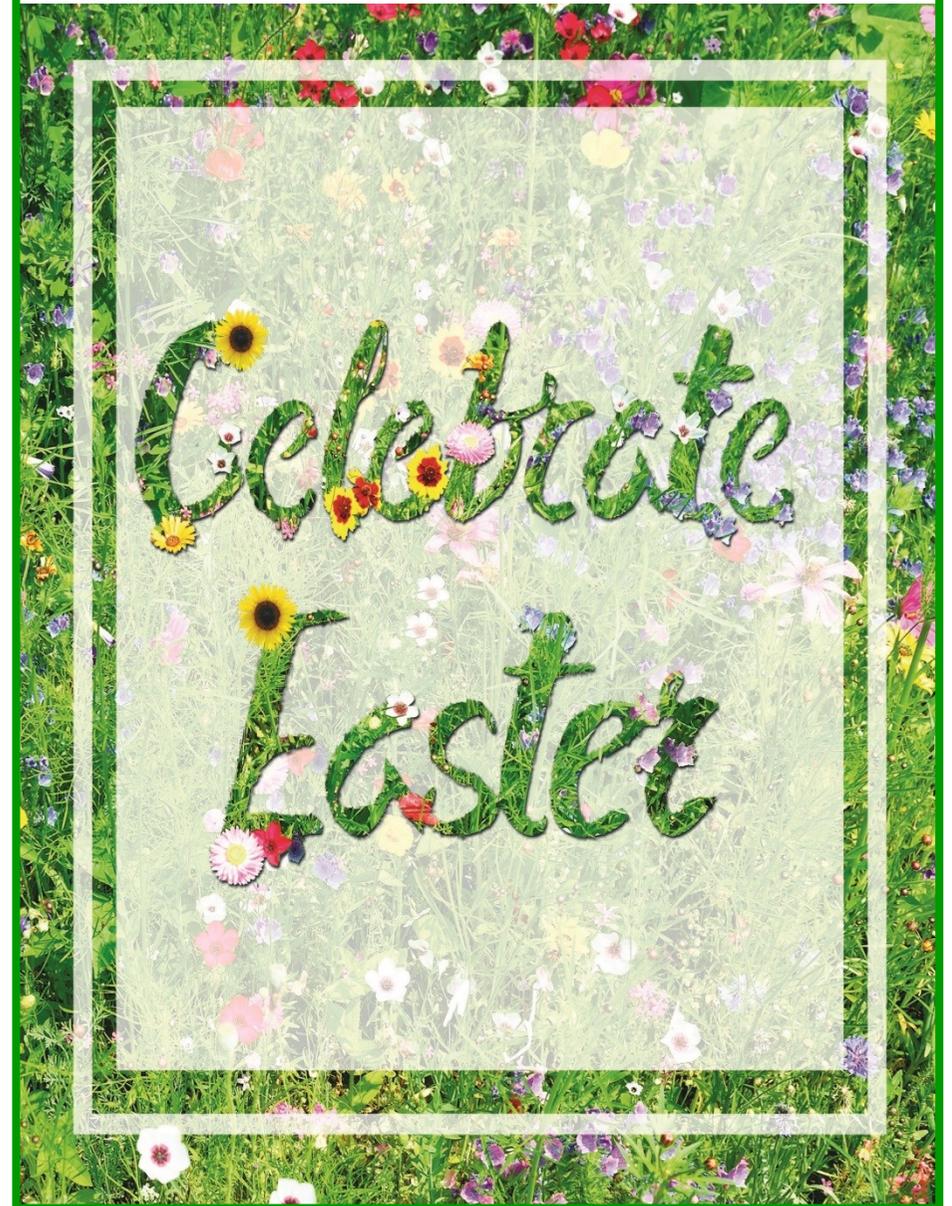


Thanks to everyone who helped with the churchyard tidy-up on 14th March, both on the ground and keeping us all fed and watered. Here are some photos of the workers!



St. Giles Church Exhall Parish Magazine



St Giles' Parish Church, Exhall - www.stgileschurchexhall.info

The Parish Office at St Giles' Church Hall, St Giles' Road, Ash Green, CV7 9GZ
Telephone/answerphone: 024 7636 8008

Office email: office@stgileschurchexhall.info

The Parish Office is open Monday to Wednesday, 10.00 am to 12.00 noon.

Sunday Worship

8am	Holy Communion
9.30am	Holy Communion (sung)
11.30am	All Age Service (Baptisms usually on 3rd Sunday)
5.30pm	Evening Prayer (Sung Eucharist on 1st Sunday)

Weekday Services

8am	Morning Prayer (daily except Friday)
10am	Holy Communion (Wednesdays)

Other Useful Information

Ministry to the sick and housebound

We are always pleased to visit, at home or in hospital. But we need to know who would welcome a visit. Contact the office on (024) 76 368008.

Sunday School

This is now incorporated into the 11.30am service, which is always family friendly. Every 2nd Sunday, the service includes 'Busy Little Fingers', a programme of exciting mixed activities for children.

Christenings and Weddings

Enquiries should be made to the office (024) 76 368008.

Bereavement and funerals

We will always take funerals for anyone in the parish, either at church or at the crematorium. Our new burial ground, St Giles' Meadow is now in use as well. Enquiries should be made to the office (024) 76 368008.

The Bereavement Drop-In is open on alternate Thursdays in the Small Hall. Please contact Sue Barns on 07946 051122.

Foodbank Do you know someone in need of a helping hand? St Giles' is part of the local (Bedworth) Foodbank. It's quick, simple and anonymous. Contact the office for a voucher on (024) 76 368008.

New members of any age are always welcome at the following:

Bell ringing	Practices on Thursdays 7.30-9pm (except 3rd Thursday)
Choir	Practices on Fridays at 7pm.
Worship Band	Practices on Wednesdays at 7.30pm.

Front Cover : Parish Pump

Back Cover: Churchyard tidy-up pictures

Ministry & Admin

Vicar	Gail Phillip	024 7664 5030 07869 395980
Wardens	Neva Khan Denise Crampsie	07496 859598 07952 267685
Readers	John Owen Hilary Cryer Chris Wilson	7636 6111 7673 8900 07717 523512
Administrator/Rotas	Vacant	7636 8008
Bereavement Drop-In	Sue Barns	07946 051122
Children's & Families' Worker	Jen Watson	07866 615873
Electoral Roll	Beryl Owen	7636 6111
Halls Bookings	Tina Watkins	7664 5278
Parish Magazine	Tina Watkins	7664 5278
Pastoral Care	Viv Hopkins	7664 5161
PCC Secretary	Carol Gough	7631 8219
PCC Treasurer & Gift Aid	Stephen Carter	7631 2831
Safeguarding	Muriel Ganley	07988 477659
Website	Gail Phillip	024 7664 5030

Church & Worship

Bell Ringing	Viv Hopkins	7664 5161
Brasses, Care Home Services	Chrissie Hughes	7631 5468
Choir/Organists	Henry Wagstaff Kathryn Unsworth	7633 2660 7667 3325
Flowers in Church	Irene Prideaux	7636 1321
Prayer Chain	Chris Wilson	07717 523512
Verger	Mandy Williams	7633 7188

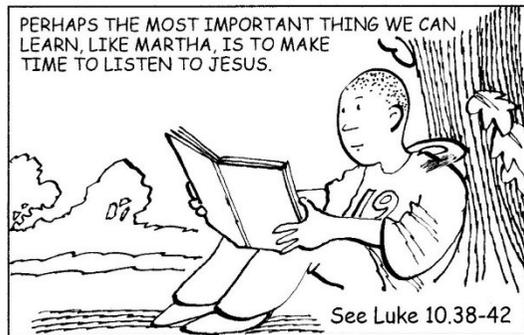
Young People, Nurture & Discipleship

Home Groups & Emmaus	Gail Phillip	024 7664 5030 07869 395980
Thursday Toddler Group	Sue Sullivan	7673 8897

Other Groups & Activities

11.30 Worship Band	Roy Edwards	7664 4916
Church Band	Eric Gray	
Cross Stitch	Ann Crutchlow	7631 3845
Drama Club	Tina Watkins	7664 5278
Food Bank	Alan Marshall	07809 203178
Hospice Coffee Morning	Chrissie Hughes	7631 5468
Mothers' Union	Mandy Williams	7633 7188
Over 50's Club	Marion Biddle	7673 8883

Words and Actions



Any news, reflections, stories, pictures, jokes or brainteasers to share within these pages? I'd love to have them! Please email them to tinawatkins@btinternet.com or drop them into the parish office or in the "W" pigeonhole in church. The next magazine will be for May and the copy deadline date is **Sunday 19th April**.

Welcome to your April Magazine

At the time of writing, we have received news of even more stringent restrictions on travel and social contact. Difficult times indeed, and as a result I am unable to visit the office to print this month's magazine. For those who have the technology, it will be loaded onto our website. Normal service will be resumed as soon as possible!

Within these pages are messages of encouragement from Gail, our Readers, Jen Watson and the Worldwide President of the MU, Sheran Harper. I hope you will take heart from their words as we face an unprecedented period of threat to the health of our nation and, indeed, to the worldwide population. I know that the St Giles community is doing all it can to support and help those who are vulnerable and particularly in need of assistance at this time.

Along with all churches and other religious establishments, St Giles has closed its doors to services and private prayer for the foreseeable future, but please continue to pray at home. Gail has updated the website with some information in the 'What's On' section about suggested time slots where we could be praying together. More details will continue to be added.

In the meantime, stay safe and keep in touch in whatever way you can!

Tina Watkins

Where to find ...

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With love from the Vicar . . .

So much has changed since I last wrote for the magazine! My heart goes out to you in whatever circumstances you find yourself in at the moment – whether as someone who is poorly and self-isolating completely; whether as parents coping with the challenge of trying to work from home as well as provide some routine and structure for you kids now off school; whether you're a student or the parent or grandparent of one who has put in hard work and effort towards exams which will not now take place, or whether you are on the frontline working for the NHS or in other vital services – thank you so much for all you are doing. It would be hard to find many aspects of life at the moment which are not affected directly, or indirectly by the Coronavirus outbreak and this will be an anxious time for many. Hopefully, the measures announced by the Government this week will help to alleviate some of the financial pressures many will be facing and offer at least some reassurance for those living with a great deal of uncertainty.



The social distancing which is necessarily in place means that we are going to have to be more creative and proactive than ever in the ways we keep in touch and offer support to our community. Please do be picking up the phone, sending cards, texts, emails and making use of social media to reduce the sense of isolation in what is going to be a long haul for us all. If you're able to access it, our website www.stgileschurchexhall.info will continue to be updated with news and resources which we hope will be of help. There will be a video message posted each Sunday as a virtual way to gather as a church. There are also details of when the church building is open for private prayer.

Do also make use of our Facebook Page: St Giles Church Exhall. For those who may not find it easy to make use of wider technology, we are also setting up a Volunteer Phone Support Network to help keep in touch with those who may not be able to access other means of communication. If you become aware of people who would value this contact do let us know, always asking their permission to pass on contact details first if this would be of help to them. This will hopefully flag up those in particular need and those who may have less other support from family and friends so we can offer whatever assistance we can. This, more than ever, is a time when we need to take up John Wesley's words:

"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."

We will need to focus on what we *can* do rather than on what we can't, transforming obstacles into opportunities. This time has the potential to release a lot of creativity in and around us, as one writer has put it, 'to have time to have time' – maybe to get back

You have been busy in these acts of love but now many of you are being called to be quiet and to self-isolate in an effort to prevent the spread of the virus. You will discover there is still so much we can do as members because as a movement we are ideally placed to support and act in this time, but only within the health advice given by your respective governments.

Now here are a few practical ideas to start with:-

- Pray and intercede for everyone including the health care professionals, the sick, the isolated, the bereaved and all those directly involved in finding a cure for this coronavirus.
- Pray and spend time listening to God, strengthening your relationship with him, reading his word and sharing it with others.
- Families Worldwide is an excellent resource to guide your prayers for members across the globe and the stories in Families First can open a good conversation. I can assure you that using these two resources will give the feeling of love and togetherness.
- Our trustees have been using WhatsApp to encourage, support and pray for one another – you can use it in the same way and additionally even share a new recipe, prayer requests and messages of encouragement.
- Facetime and Skype are other options so the family can still feel near to each other ... even with physical distance. Board games and other activities can keep the children and grandchildren occupied too. Even saying hello to neighbours at a particular time each day could bring great excitement.
- For those who are able to - delivering groceries, medication and running errands within the parameters of keeping safe is very useful for those who cannot go out
- You could even start streaming a Branch Meeting if you're feeling very adventurous! And that is one I would certainly do!

As I close, I leave you with the encouraging words from 2 Corinthians Chapter 12 reading verse 9 and 10. Such reassuring words. "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

Brothers and sisters let us pray together:

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples, I am with you always, even to the end of time. Be with me today Lord, as I offer myself to you. Hear my prayers for others and for myself, and keep me in your tender loving care always. Amen



A message from the MU Worldwide President

Dear Friends,

During these unprecedented time Mothers' Union is committed to ensuring that we continue to support our membership and the communities we are part of.

We know that our work and experience in re-building communities and supporting family life is going to be more important than ever once the threat of COVID-19 subsides. Our members will be ready and be some of the first in line to support these around them.

The love and prayers of Mothers' Union worldwide President go out to all who are combatting, or preparing to combat, the COVID-19 virus across the globe.

I greet you with the love and courage of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour because He is our strength, our hope and our solid rock.

So much has been happening recently as COVID-19 is declared a pandemic and governments are advising that we take the necessary precautions to avoid the spread of the virus. There is so much we have to come to terms with in such a short time.

One of our faithful members, Dianne, went to deliver groceries to her mum who is self-isolating after recent travel. She was in tears as she dropped the groceries at the doorstep and watched her mum through the window with no chance of a hug. There are so many similar stories including those of people who are ill or afraid, lonely or isolated.

And in times like these I encourage you to take heart and do not fear because the Lord, your God is by your side - an ever present help in times of trouble. In the book of Joshua Chapter 1 verse 9 we read, I hereby command you: be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Amen.

As members you are bold and brave, full of courage and compassion, and so very loving and just like Esther you stand daily on the frontline calling for an end to injustices and advocating for all that supports stable families and communities.

in touch with people we've lost contact with through our busyness, or to complete long outstanding tasks, take up a new hobby or build up our life of prayer. Even with the anxieties it brings, if we can view this time as gift rather than curse, we will be better equipped to enjoy as well as endure it.

We are journeying through Lent at the moment, remembering Jesus' self-imposed isolation through forty days in the wilderness. We can take courage from his example in rejecting every negative assault on the mind, resisting every temptation to simply satisfy his own needs and overcoming every obstacle to complete the mission God had set for him. This month will also take us through Holy Week and Easter, that journey from the darkness of the cross to the light of the empty tomb. Although we will not be able to gather in the same way to mark Easter – take a look at the Creative Crosses and Easter Party Hat initiatives mentioned in this magazine as a way for us to make and celebrate this journey together, keeping resurrection hope at the heart of our community. Please do keep in touch during this time, particularly if you or others around you are in particular need – we're here to help and are holding the whole parish very much in our prayers.

With love, Gail

Strange times ...

It really is a strange and rather unsettling time and I know many of us are quite anxious about the bombardment of information which keeps being presented to us. And so I decided this week as the news continued to try and depress me to find as many blessings in my days as I could.

I have been touched by the offers of help to get food or anything I needed from neighbours, some of whom I have rarely spoken to. When I did go shopping the other day—quite a challenge— one very kind gentleman quite unexpectedly helped me when I tried to purchase a pack of soya milk and was told I could only buy four individual cartons. He was behind me in the queue and told the cashier to put the other four on his bill so I could have the full pack.

On Monday last in glorious sunshine I saw a peacock butterfly sunning itself, the first butterfly I have seen this year. And I came across a big patch of violets which smelled absolutely delightful. I have frogspawn in my pond, another source of pleasure and the bird's morning chorus is wonderful to hear.

When I start thinking, there are so very many blessings which we often are just too busy or preoccupied to notice. I am trying to take every opportunity to notice and give thanks for all these mini wonders as I call them.

It perhaps seems a bit naïve but simplicity is the key to inner peace and a thankful heart we are told is something that God truly loves. May each one of you remain safe and peaceful and blessed with all manner of good things each day.

With love, Hilary

Thought for the Month

We are pilgrims on a journey ...

In our church services we have been with Jesus in the wilderness, visited Jesus by night with Nicodemus and we have sat at the well with the Samaritan woman. Then we should have grieved with the mother of Jesus and also with Mary and Martha when their brother Lazarus died. Now we should be marching into that Holy of Holy weeks with a donkey! However our journey has taken a very different turn with the current events and social isolation that have been thrust upon us. Our journey continues but in a very different direction. It is a journey of contrasts; highs and lows, conflicting emotions, anxieties and questions.

Most of us at some point in our lives (and now more than ever, probably all of us) have been in a desert place, where we seem to have been forsaken and are all alone, bereft of comfort and desperate for loving guidance and spiritual assurance. It was a bit like that for Jesus. He found the strength to survive the desert's harsh conditions and the tempter's seduction by feeding on God's word. In our wilderness experiences we can be tempted to choose our own will instead of seeking God's guidance. It can be easier to make choices that will lead us, little by little, away from what God wants for us instead of looking for His way.

Jesus relied on the power which the Spirit gave him. And He gives us his Holy Spirit to help us, "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness..." (Romans 8:26) and Jesus is there to be our guide and consoler, "He guides us along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though we walk through the darkest valley, we will fear no evil, for you are with us; your rod and your staff, they comfort us." (Psalm 23.)

And how many of us come to Jesus when we are alone at night, for then our fears are sometimes at their worst? It is likely that Nicodemus chose the night as the best time for seeking a private and undisturbed conversation with Jesus. For us it may be the same and whatever our fears we can know that God is in control. We can know the Creator of the Universe is more powerful than anything we're afraid of. We know God helps in many different ways, including helping us carry on if the worst should happen. Even if our fears are realized, God *will* make a way for us.

With the woman at the well we were invited to drink of the living water that satisfies our deepest longings and gives life that is rich and free. When our life seems to have no purpose and is full of heartache, pain, and shame we are offered the gift of eternal life with Jesus. With Martha and Mary we grieve for



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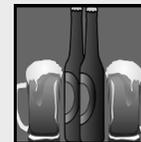


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We are a warm, friendly group always happy to welcome new members!

Every Tuesday in St Giles Main Hall, 1-3pm.

Membership £12/year, sessions £2.

**Further info: Marion Biddle 024 7673 8883
or Joyce Downes 024 7631 7609**



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all we have lost but also learn of God's promise to raise up all who have died in Christ to everlasting life. The creed, the profession of our faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and in the saving power of God, culminates in the proclamation of the resurrection of the dead on the last day and in life everlasting. This is our faith and our hope. God gives us the power of his Holy Spirit that we may be made alive in Christ. Even now we can experience the power of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus in our personal lives. The Holy Spirit is ever ready to change and transform us into people of faith, hope, and love.

And knowing that truth we can shout "Hosanna!" Our king comes to us; triumphant and victorious and riding on a donkey ... the colt was a sign of peace. Jesus enters Jerusalem in meekness and humility, as the Messianic King who offers victory and peace to his people but that victory and peace would be secured by the cross. Jesus went to Jerusalem knowing full well what awaited him; betrayal, rejection, and crucifixion. Perhaps reminding us that we too can only experience the joy of Easter when we have been through the desolation and grief of Good Friday.

So finally, in these very difficult, uncertain and troubling times, let us take to heart these words of Jesus himself. He speaks with authority because he is the Son of God. What he says is true, and we can stake our very lives upon it: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (John 14:27) Whatever your circumstances and whatever you are going through at this moment may the joy of Easter fill your hearts with His love and peace now and forever more.

Chris

I have a picture frame on my desk. It was my mother's and contains the following words. As long as I can remember this was always displayed in our home. It seems very appropriate for the present time and I wanted to share it with you.

"Let nothing disturb thee, nothing affright thee. All things are passing, God never changeth. Patient endurance attaineth to all things. Who God possesseth in nothing is wanting. Alone God sufficeth"

St Theresa's Bookmark.

The words are very comforting and meaningful to me and I hope they will be for you also.

With love, Hilary

Jen's Page

Hello everyone, and welcome to what is a slightly different Children's and Families' page here at St Giles!

I really hope that this article finds you all safe and well and that you are coping with the beginnings of a very new and different way of life which we will be experiencing for who knows how long! I want to bring with me a message of hope today. Hope is what Jesus promises to us and hope is what I shall be holding on to during the coming few weeks and months. During the first week of real changes and health warnings, I have personally struggled. I have struggled with illness and also with the mental health challenges that have come with it. I think a lot of people will be able to relate to the stress that some of us are feeling right now. But this is not how Jesus wants us to live our lives. Through Jesus we have hope and love. We can find peace and togetherness. In Matthew 6: v27 Jesus says, **'Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?'** and let's face it, He has a point! Let's look for new ways to love each other and to bring joy to each of our days, with God at the centre.

During this unprecedented time, the way we are going to keep in touch is going to be a bit different at St Giles', we have got to get creative! Many of you will know that I do enjoy getting stuck in to new ideas and projects, however this seems like a huge undertaking – one I am quite excited for. We are so blessed today to have so many different ways of reaching people, communicating and sharing information and we are hoping to take advantage of as many of these as we can. I really am having to upskill myself, so do bear with me.

Parents, we are moving in to the great unknown here. Personally, I don't remember seeing 'teacher' on the job description when my first baby was placed into my arms nearly 10 years ago! And I'm quite sure it's not me that my children envisage when they hear the word teacher. But when you look at it, we have always been teachers! Across their relatively short lives we have taught them so much, we have taught them to talk – some in more than one language! We have taught them to walk, to brush their teeth, to talk to us when they're sad, to dance when they're happy. We have done all of this by modelling our lives to them and that is what they need from us now. We can do this! Let's not get hung up on providing a 6 hour rigorous school day



Parent & Toddler Group

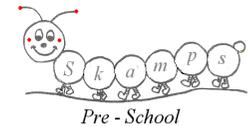
Calling all babies and toddlers! And their parents, grandparents and carers! Come and play for a hour and a half in lots of space, with our varied range of toys and activities, singing, snack time and just a place to hang out, relax and talk for a while.

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schedule for our young people if it doesn't work for your family and don't seek to compare your day with the other families on Facebook. We will all be struggling and coping in our own ways. Have fun together, enjoy this once in a lifetime opportunity to be together. But please know that I am here to talk. I am going to miss seeing you all every Sunday, at Messy Church, at Playgroup and during the school holidays but whilst we can't physically meet, I would love to chat and catch up with you. We must strengthen and lean on each other whenever we can.

Goodness me, we had so many fun activities planned in the lead up to Easter Sunday. It was looking to be a really creative and interactive period for us all but with your help at home we are hoping to still be able to share most of these – although we are not 100% sure how this is going to look yet, so please keep an eye on the website and on our Facebook page for what you can join in with. These activities will be 'all age' – please do join in at home young and old alike! Easter is here and with this we will still rejoice!

I have shared a little Easter Wordsearch overleaf for anyone that fancies having a go whilst we are stuck inside. Why not have a go at drawing your own one up and posting it next door for a neighbour to have a go at?

Please do keep in touch on Facebook and on the website. My email address is jenwatson.stgiles@gmail.com, I would love to hear from you if you are in need of a chat!

I will be praying for your safe keeping and sanity. See you in May everyone!

Jen

Panto Review

I want to say how much we enjoyed Humpty Dumpty. It had everything. A great cast where everyone was confident and in control. The chorus was strong—the children knew exactly what to do in singing and dance. They were superb and your choreography was so varied and challenging. The scenery was brilliant, especially the wood, the bush and the castle. I love the special effects and the ultra violet sequence was fascinating. The pace was good; it didn't drag and the plot was clear. I applaud all that you and the Drama Club have achieved this year.



Alan Biddle

Mouse Makes

LABROAD
 OCROSSE
 RHAPPYB
 DONKEYS
 FSCIASC
 EAHNCAO
 ANEGETA
 SNSPLOT
 TAPALMS

DIMOURJEWSSLNPAATTCUPKJCB
 RPASSOVEROBEARRCHRISTEREE
 IGNABODYKILLIAROOLOOTSUTA
 NEATTMEALGODLYELRWILLUCRT
 KDISCIPLESONSUSSTNNMESSIAH
 EBREADWINEDXGETHSEMANEFYE
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HUGDAWN
 RTOMBMG
 EOOTPOE
 ECDEFRL
 DRNMRNK
 AOEPAAI
 YWWLINS
 SDSESGS
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 SAVIOUR
 PRAISEY
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 ICOINSL
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 ROAD • CROWD • CUT • PALMS
 BRANCHES • KING • HOSANNA
 DISCIPLES • ROOM • PASSOVER
 FEAST • EAT • DRINK • BREAD
 WINE • SON • MAN • BLOOD • CUP
 MEAL • JEW • PLOT • KILL • COINS
 GETHSEMANE • PRAY • WILL
 BETRAY • KISS • ARREST • MESSIAH
 CHRIST • CRUCIFY • JESUS • CROWN
 THORNS • ROBE • TREE • NAILS
 CROSS • SPIRIT • DARKNESS
 TEMPLE • DEATH • LOTS • DICE
 TOMB • STONE • LINEN • BODY
 BURY • GUARD • THREE DAYS
 DAWN • MORNING • ANGEL • TELL
 HEAVEN • GOOD NEWS • LORD
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Easter Party Hat Home Parade!

Let's celebrate Easter Sunday together!
 Create an Easter Party Hat out of materials
 you already have at home.
 Use the hat to express something of what
 Easter means to you and why it's so special.

Wear your hat on Easter Morning! Maybe even go for a walk in it!



If you can, take a photos of you and the family wearing your
 hats and post on our Facebook page (St Giles Church, Exhall)
 or send by email to the Parish Office or Rev Gail
 for the website and magazine*
 One way to share some Easter joy and creativity
 on such a special day!

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

** Please do not send in the photo unless you are giving your permission for us to display
 on St Giles Church website, Facebook page and in our magazine.*



CREATIVE WAYS TO CELEBRATE



Creative Crosses for Palm Sunday to Good Friday

Let's get creative to mark Holy Week!

Make a cross—draw and colour it, knit it, make it from wood, clay or things in your garden, however you like!

Don't buy anything new, make it from things you already have at home.

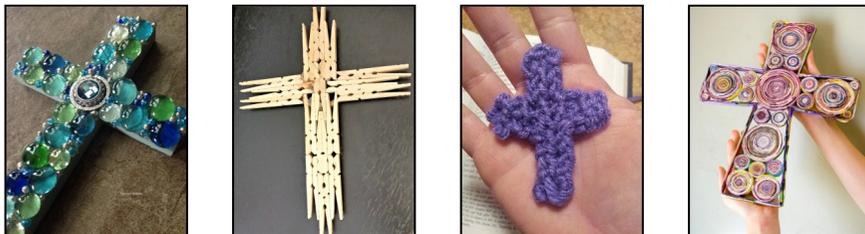
You have between now and Palm Sunday on 5th April!

On Palm Sunday, display your cross on your front door or in your window to remind our whole community of Jesus' journey to the cross for us and as a symbol of hope.

If you can, take a photo and share on our Facebook Page (St Giles Church, Exhall)

Or by email to the Parish Office or Rev Gail for the website and magazine*

Keep the cross there until 3 pm on Good Friday and then take it down as we wait for the joy of Easter Sunday!



* Please do not send in the photo unless you are giving your permission for us to display on St Giles Church website, Facebook page and in our magazine.

Operation Christmas Child



In these uncertain times, we don't even know if the shoebox scheme will be able to go ahead this year as everyone is going to be severely restricted in how and what they collect, at least for a few months.

So let's put collecting on hold for now and see what happens later on in the year. Meanwhile if you have already bought or made things, hang on to them at home for the time being.

Cynthia and Gwyneth



1 April - Fooling Around

I was about six when I began to enjoy April Fool's Day. My older brother was very clever at appropriate hoaxes, not only deceiving me but also mum and dad. On the whole my childish efforts were encouraged. The day was full of laughs, even at school, where the teachers would try to trick us and all day long no one quite believed anything they were told. So it went on, year after year, though I think it all seems as a bit unsophisticated for the modern generation.

You couldn't say that, though, about probably the most famous April Fool's effort of all time. In the 1960's BBC TV broadcast a feature on the spaghetti farms of Italy. Even those of us who bought our spaghetti in the supermarket from the pasta shelves began to wonder if we'd been wrong. Italian farmers explained their work and the progress of the spaghetti plants was carefully filmed, from planting to reaping. And all in the BBC's most serious documentary manner. It took a while to appreciate that this was Aunty playing games. Whatever next!

The odd thing is that no one is quite sure of the origin of this very British tradition. Most attribute it to changes in Britain's calendar in the 1700s, when New Year's Day moved from March 25th to January 1st. Not surprisingly, the change caused a lot of confusion and mistakes around the start of April. Others look further back, to the ancient Roman feast of Hilaria, when the goddess Cybele was celebrated with pranks and jokes around the spring equinox, March 25th. Either way a touch of hilarity at the end of Lent does not seem amiss. Go to Greece, where the resurrection of Jesus is celebrated with fireworks and parties to see how it might work.

by Canon David Winter via Parish Pump

Nature Notes

These nature notes are dedicated to the memory of the late Mr Norman Edmonds, Local Historian, Naturalist and well respected Ash Green School Master. Mr Edmonds wrote a page in the Church Magazine for 30 years, and I humbly try to follow in his footsteps.

Now's the time to do a bit of extra bird watching. My usual routine is to fill the bird feeders that hang on the rowan tree on the patio around 8.00 am. In the surrounding trees I am being watched by magpies and crows – as soon as I disappear down they come. Today there are seven magpies, three crows and two wood pigeons and they gobble up all that's on the ground. I have two cock pheasants and two females. The cock birds start calling at 5.00 am when it's still dark, and have been fighting to see which one is boss, the largest with the brightest feather seems to be the winner today. Ground feeding birds— I have seen chaffinches, plenty of house sparrows, dunnocks and a pair of robins.

On the feeders I have seen both male and female greater spotted woodpeckers at the same time, and just recently I have heard the male drumming loudly from an old ash tree. Also there have been lots of blue tits, great tits, long tailed tits and the rarer female black cap, and she has been around for several weeks.

It's late morning now, and a large bird has just landed on the fat ball feeder. It's a rook and he's trying to get his beak round a whole fat ball to take it away – I'll draw a line at that and send him packing – cheek!

Stella Bunting

From the Registers

Baptisms

*You have received the light of Christ;
walk in this light all the days of your life.
(from the Baptism Service)*

15th March

Theo Louis Burdett

Funerals

*In the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear
no evil, for you are with me. (Psalm 23 verse 4)*

John Simmons, aged 75 years

Sybil Trevis, aged 89 years

I don't believe it ...

... was Dot's first thought when confronted by a hall full of her friends on the occasion of her 90th birthday! She says she was reminded of both Victor Meldrew and his famous catchphrase and another star of the small screen, Cilla Black, who greeted her guests with "surprise, surprise"! Dot had no idea of what lay in store for her when she was collected to "go out for a meal" on 28th February, but was overwhelmed by the love and



good wishes of all those who attended her surprise party, as well as the greetings and congratulations received from those who couldn't be there in person.



**So, once again Dot,
congratulations on your 90th
birthday—and may there be
Many Happy Returns!**



...er... the good news is the youth-group have made a great start by pressure-washing the west window...