



## *SERVICES IN FEBRUARY*



At an emergency meeting of St Leonard's Parochial Church Council on 12th January, it was decided that public worship in church buildings would be suspended until further notice.

Worship will continue for the time being where it is safe to do so using Zoom transmissions. Our website, [stleonardsswithland.org](http://stleonardsswithland.org) gives all up to date information. We trust that with the continuing Covid 19 situation you will understand this decision was deemed to be necessary.

Romans 13: 8-10

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery", "You shall not steal", "You shall not covet" and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbour as yourself". Love does no harm to a neighbour. Therefore, love is the fulfilment of the law.

**Revd Darren Walker**



St Leonard's Church

[www.stleonardsswithland.org](http://www.stleonardsswithland.org)

# THE LINK

*With St Leonard's in Swithland  
in February 2021*



If you require help or assistance or simply need to chat, please feel free to contact us and we will do our best to help.

Assistant Curate: Revd Darren Walker 07568173184

Churchwarden: Mrs Sally Allen 01162 375704

## *Dear Friends,*

This month marks the beginning of Lent, starting with Ash Wednesday and lasting for the next forty days. This time is spent in preparing ourselves by being more vigilant in our prayer life and in the reading of scripture. It is also a time of self examination and self denial.

We deny ourselves in reflection of Christ's own denials during his time in the wilderness, hence the forty days of Lent. Jesus, whilst preparing himself for his forthcoming ministry, denied himself food and drink, denied himself earthly power and would not be turned by the devil to walk away from his Father; all things that he could have easily given in to.

If we are truly to honour Christ and reflect his wilderness experience, how are we to do this with integrity and love? I ask this because over the last year we have all given up many things that we hold dear to us as we battle through the pandemic and for some this has already been a very heavy burden to carry. How much more can we deny ourselves during this Lent?

The pandemic had a start time and it will, God willing, be soon over with the distribution of vaccines. We are moving from the darkness and into the light once more. The season of Lent reflects this well. By denying ourselves we are honouring Him. It too has a beginning and an end; it is a time when we prepare ourselves for the hope found in the hallelujahs of Palm Sunday, to the sad goodbyes of Maundy Thursday, to the despair, loss and horror of Good Friday, whilst waiting for the glorious proclamation of Easter morning, 'Hallelujah He is risen indeed'. So friends, this Lent look within yourself and deny yourself so that we glorify Him who gave up the most and walked humbly to the cross for our sakes.

### *Let us pray:*

Lord, as we enter Lent help us to draw near to you in praise, stripping away all that distracts us from worshipping you. As Jesus resisted temptation by the devil in the wilderness, help us reflect on his faithfulness, his rejection of worldly values, and hold these thoughts in our hearts throughout Lent and beyond. Lord, may Lent be a time of inward searching and self denial that makes us more able to look with compassion at the needs of the world. Amen.

*Blessings, Darren*



## CHRISTIANS IN THE FOREST

The Christians in the Forest Lent Course is "**A Passion for Christ**" by Bishop Michael Baughen. Michael says, "In today's world, personal comfort is king and queen. We like to have our coffee just the way we want it, we want our online shopping to be delivered the next day and we definitely don't want to have to wait in line for anything. So how do we feel about the idea of suffering for the Gospel of Christ?"

These will be Zoom studies all on a Tuesday and all from 7.pm to 8.pm

Please use the following Zoom codes to access:

Meeting ID: 822 7256 4730 Passcode: 389 580.

Course dates and topics are:

- 23rd February - Sharing in the suffering of Christ
- 2nd March - Seeking love in the Church of Christ
- 9th March - Spreading the aroma/knowledge of Christ
- 16th March - Shining with the light of Christ
- 23rd March - Showing the life of Jesus
- 30th March - Serving with a passion for Christ

There will also be a Christians in the Forest Zoom 'drop in' Coffee Morning every Thursday from 11.00am to 12noon for the duration of the lockdown. Drop in for a chat, a prayer and a book extract reading - readings will include Alexander McCall Smith's "In a Time of Distance" and Barack Obama's "Promised Land". Please use the following Zoom codes to access: Meeting ID: 828 0989 4085 Passcode: 848 978

There will also be a Spring/Summer course "Unpacking the Hymns, find out the history of your favourite hymns" every Tuesday from 7pm to 8pm from 20th April to 25th May - via Zoom or maybe in person!

*Gary Lee*

## *Christmas at Rose Cottage*

*Of all the many Christmases of my long life, this Covid Christmas was what Craig Revel Horwood would have called FAB-U-LOUS. It started at the beginning of December with all the decorations going up inside - beautiful trees and lights and several Father Christmases and the outside lights which won the prize for the best lit business premises in Mountsorrel.*

*Colin and some carol singers came to see us - they couldn't come inside but stood under umbrellas and sang to us - some of the staff dressed up as elves and entertained us too - and we made Christmas crackers and calendars.*

*Christmas lunch was beautiful with all the trimmings and the table cloths covered in golden stars - and I forgot to tell you, we all made Christingles prior to the big day. It all seems a bit unreal, as I expect it has for everyone this year, but at least we have not been lonely.*

*May I take this opportunity to thank everybody for their kind wishes and lovely Christmas cards and I hope that 2021 sees us back to some form of normality.*

*My love to you all and we'll meet again.*

***Pat Copson***

## **NEWS FROM THE TOWER**

During the 2nd lockdown we carried on ringing by chiming one bell prior to the Sunday service.

However, there is no ringing at present while there are no services. Nick Cunningham, our steeple keeper, tolled the number 5 bell for Eric Atkinson's funeral service.

***Janet Beeby - Tower Captain***



## **SWITHLAND CHURCH MEN'S CLUB**



The annual carol singing the Swithland Church Men's Club and members of St Leonard's Church put on each year, singing along Swithland Lane and in the village, unfortunately could not take place at Christmas on account of Covid 19 restrictions.

It was therefore decided that as charities had suffered from a loss of funds throughout the year, somehow there must be a way to raise monies for them.

An appeal was therefore made to all residents asking for donations to support our usual charities LOROS Hospice and RAINBOWS Hospice for Children and Young People. Notices were delivered to every household which resulted in the raising of £940 which will be shared equally between the two charities.

We thank everyone who generously participated and know the charities will be extremely grateful for your help. Hopefully this coming December, still far away, we will once again be able to cheer everyone with carols.

***Martin Greenwood***



## **Launde Abbey**

**"Launde Abbey is closed" says David Newman, the Abbey's Warden,  
"but Launde's ministry continues."**

We may all be stuck in our homes, but there is plenty going on for you at Launde@Home, our online ministry of retreats, quiet days and training days. Why not transform lockdown into an opportunity for prayer, silence, reflection and spiritual growth?

There's so much on offer: an exploration of the Lord's prayer with Stephen Cherry, a Quilting and Textiles retreat, a chance to explore David Newman's book Growing Up Into The Children Of God, an Enneagram retreat, a couple of quiet days - and that's just in this month or so!

Plus we've got an ever expanding library of past retreat talks together with audio worship and other resources available all free - it's a cornucopia of delights! Why not check out our website today? [www.laundeabbey.org.uk](http://www.laundeabbey.org.uk)

## *Epiphany Reflections*

### *Sermon extract from Gary*

As I write this it is two days after Epiphany and next Sunday's reading is about the baptism of Jesus and the sudden revealing of Christ as God's son.

Both events tell of the glory of God shining out through Jesus.

Jesus brought light into a dark world 2000 years ago.

And we need that light today don't we?

We need a star - the shining light of Jesus to follow. We need a vision of a better world toward which to strive. If there is any urgent demand being thrust upon the Christian church today it is to translate the concept of the Kingdom of God into simple language - to bring God into the here and now.

There is a church on the east coast that was destroyed in the floods of 1953. It had not been properly insured and its congregation felt unable to rebuild it, and so the ruins remained untouched.

One day, however, the Admiralty sent a representative to urge its rebuilding. He told people that if they did not rebuild the church, the navy would. Which they were no doubt overjoyed to hear. The man from the Admiralty then added: "That spire is on our charts and maps. It is the landmark by which our ships steer their course."

Church spires and towers are also the landmark, the place, the pointer where we Christians learn to steer our course to God's Kingdom. Where we find and meet with God and each other. At the moment our church services are suspended but the tower of St Leonard's is a strong tower and will still be there waiting to welcome us when we are able to return.

The joy of Epiphany and the revealing of Christ as God's son at his baptism shines a light into our lives and gives us a glimpse of His Kingdom and a vision for a better world.

As we stand at the beginning of a new year we are living through dark, grim times - but we have reasons to be hopeful. Because a gift, provided by God, has been discovered by our wise men, our Magi - our scientists!

Having searched for months and then discovered God's gift our scientists have taken that gift and produced a vaccine - a vaccine that is allowing us to see a way out of this pandemic and giving us good hope.

A simple hope.

For the things that we long for now are much simpler. We yearn for the resumption of church services, to be able to sit close to each other, sing together, a hug, a hand shake. These are the things that are important to us now. We are seeing things differently.

All over the world people are seeing God's creation in a different light - a more respectful light. There is more resolve to protect the environment and value all God's creatures - to care for each other. And the church is uniquely placed to respond to this new beginning - to provide leadership and example.

As we contemplate a new year our prayer must be that in the coming year the Church will show the way, that it will be strengthened, emboldened and enabled to tell of its vision for a loving, caring and compassionate world.

I pray also that we - as disciples of Christ - will be able to do the same.

*Gary Lee*

### **CHURCH FLOODLIGHTING**

**Christmastide 2020** - Jeff Harrison

To mark the passing from the darkness of Valerie's November to the glorious light of December and Christmas that Valerie loved so much.

**February 1st 2021** - Julia Newman

In loving memory of my husband John's birthday.

If you would like to sponsor the floodlighting of our beautiful church in memory of a loved one or special occasion, please contact Sally Allen our Churchwarden - 01162 375704



## *In Remembrance of Eric Atkinson*

### **Eulogy from Eric's funeral on 6th January 2021**

Eric was born in Leeds, the son of Lily and Norman, and younger brother to John. He remained forever a proud Yorkshireman and was delighted when his niece-in-law, Kathy, and her family made their home there.

Family and family gatherings were very important to Eric. Many happy Christmases were spent in the company of brother John, his wife Betty, and their children Rick, Sue and Wendy, and later with Pat's sister Gill and husband Terry, together with their daughters, Ruth and Kathy. Sometimes, both sides of the family combined for games and singing round the piano. And in later years an annual game of cards with his great nieces and nephews became the new tradition for both sides of the family.

Much fun was also had during Christmas gatherings with the Dobson family. Peter Dobson was one of Eric's four lifelong friends from Leeds, together with David Briggs, John Heath and Keith Holloway. The group became fondly known as the "famous five" by their children, and their contact as a five was renewed by a joint 50th birthday weekend away which became an annual event for them and their wives from then onwards.

Eric had a love of languages which was cemented by his language degree at University College, London, and his national service in Germany. He was always keen to try out his language abilities on European holidays and on unsuspecting waiters in Italian restaurants - the latter to the embarrassment of Pat and Penny.

After London, Eric moved to Leicester, joining the Patents Department of the British United Shoe Machinery Company (BU) in Belgrave. Many colleagues became good friends too, but most importantly it was here that he met Pat, through the company's musicals - she in the chorus and he conducting the orchestra. They married in 1964 and two became three in 1968 with the arrival of daughter Penny.

The family lived in Thurstaston and Pat and Eric later moved to Rothley. In both, Eric was an active participant in local life - in particular through his loves of

singing and ringing. He was a member of the Thurstaston choir for many years, building on his earlier choirboy experiences at Wrangthorn Church in Leeds, and he discovered campanology (bell-ringing to you and me) which became a real passion - some might say obsession! He learned the art in Thurstaston where he later became Tower Captain and, having participated in a number of quarter and full peals himself, he turned his hand to teaching others and also joined the towers in Swithland Woodhouse. He loved the ringing life both in the tower and outside, participating in many tower trips and dinners and enjoying a drink after the weekly practices. He also enjoyed local life through the Swithland Men's Club and their activities and particularly loved the friendly competition of the Annual Swithland Show, where he contended for prizes for his jam, chutney, cakes and pies!

A strong thread of family, friends and musicality ran through all of Eric's life. He had a big impact on many people and will be much missed, but often remembered by those who knew him.



### *Eric - our friend and fellow ringer*

Eric was an honorary member of the Swithland ringers and a great supporter of the tower, attending our Thursday practices, ringing for weddings and was on our rota for our monthly service ring at St Mary's.

Peter Hunt tells me that Eric took up bellringing in 1981 under the tutelage of the tower captain at Thurstaston, learning on the 5 bells at Cossington initially. He became Tower Captain at Thurstaston and was also Steeple Keeper, responsible for bell maintenance, and Social Secretary. Indeed, he organised 11 of the joint outings with Swithland which consisted of ringing at 7 towers all over the Midlands, with lunch and dinner as an important part of the day out!

The first record of Eric ringing at Swithland is as a member of the team which rang a peal of Plain Bob Minor in 1987. This was recorded as a first peal on an inside bell for Eric and John Roberts. A peal generally lasts for 3 hours! Since then, he has taken part in many quarter peals (only 45 minutes).

Eric started to help with ringing at Swithland in the 1990's and he was a very enthusiastic teacher to those of us who started learning then, including many youngsters who were learning to ring as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award. He had a series of 'Teaching Aids' for various methods which are legendary. He was a very dedicated ringer and often despaired at some of the attempts of the rest of us!

Over the years he kept records of all the joint outings we had every Autumn with All Saints, Thurstaston, and in recent years started a record of peals and quarter peals rung at Swithland, Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves. For Swithland these records go back to 1920.

He became an honorary member of our band as he was still officially a member of the Thurstaston tower. It was a bit of a joke that when Eric was playing the organ for a service, we had better make sure our striking was good. When we were ringing call changes for 'Tittums' Eric would always tap his feet and mutter 'tee tum, tee tum, tee tum, and we will always remember him when we eventually get back to ringing that again in the future. He will be missed fondly by us all.

### *Janet Beeby - Tower Captain*



### *Eric - a talented musician*

Eric started his singing life as a choirboy at his local Church St Augustine's in Wrangthorn Leeds. Later as a teenager he sang in what was then Leeds Parish Church which is now called Leeds Minster!

Eric was a very accomplished pianist and before Canon Ray Walters retired from being Rector he managed to persuade Eric to play the organ at Swithland. So as well as singing and ringing at Thurstaston Church at that time, Eric starting playing the organ faithfully once a month which he carried on for almost 30 years. Eric usually played for the Morning Prayer Service or Matins as Eric rightly called it. He also played for the occasional Evensong service and the annual Christmas Carol Service.

When required Eric also sang bass in the choir so we could have all 4 parts to sing anthems. He was very eager to pass on his musical knowledge and always keen for the choir to sing the psalms, canticles and responses as well as the hymns at a good pace because that's how it was done in Yorkshire!

When the Benefice was formed in 2000 Eric would sometimes play the organ for the 11.15am morning services at St Mary's in Woodhouse. This could involve a hasty departure from St Leonard's if he was playing at both churches on the same Sunday.

As some of you may know, Eric was a linguist and we have fond memories of him singing the first verse of Silent Night in German at the Men's Club Christmas dinners at the Griffin Inn and also as part of the carol singing along Swithland Lane. He will be sadly missed by us all at Swithland.

### *John Roberts - Choirmaster*

#### NEWS FROM SWITHLAND ST LEONARD'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Luckily we had all been working hard throughout the Autumn term to make sure that the children could work remotely in the unlikely event that another lockdown happened.

And when it did, the children have been absolutely outstanding in their resilience and efforts! We have received fine examples of: literacy, maths, French, art, DT, geography, history...well the whole curriculum. A huge well done to all the children and their parents and to our staff for enabling our children to continue to thrive in these unusual times.

Each week a newsletter is produced which can be seen on our website and also on Twitter@SwithPrimarySch so do look there for some exceptional work.

Throughout all of this fine academic endeavour we have continued to come together - whether at home or in school we remain one school family, working together. We do not forget this passage shared by Penny, a House Captain, this week: *The Lord is with me, I will not be afraid* - Psalm 18:6

As your village school, we are here for the whole community.

If anyone needs someone to talk to, then please do get in contact and someone will give you a call. Stay safe.

*Christine Lethbridge - Headteacher*