

THE LINK

*With St Leonard's in Swithland in
March 2022*

LENT

*Lent is a tree without blossom, without leaf,
Barer than blackthorn in its winter sleep,
All unadorned. Unlike Christmas which decrees
The setting-up, the dressing-up of trees,
Lent is a taking down, a stripping bare,
A starkness after all has been withdrawn
Of surplus and superfluous,
Leaving no hiding-place, only emptiness
Between black branches, a most precious space
Before the leaf, before the times of flowers;
Lest we should see only the leaf, the flower,
Lest we should miss the stars.*

Jean M Watt

Rev. Colin Resch

Priest in charge of the Mountsorrel Benefice
with St Leonard's Swithland

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Thoughts for Lent

I am reminded by the adverts for a certain squeezy lemon, that pancake day is upon us once more (1st March in case you've missed it) and the countdown towards Easter has begun. Of course pancake day is the day before the start of Lent when the Church enters a period of solemn preparation for

Easter. Traditionally the cries of 'Hallelujah' are silenced until we rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter morning. We are encouraged to think about our lives, our lifestyle and our worship. It is a time for repentance and re-shaping of our priorities and focus.



I thought this would be a good opportunity to share with you my vision of how Church life should be so that we can journey together to make our Church just a little more Christ-like. I can sum it up in three words: Up - In - Out; but I suspect these need a little more explanation.

UP - This is to do with our relationship with God. The Upward focus reminds us to deepen our faith, to develop our discipleship, to pray, to read the Bible, to spend time studying and learning. It is as we look up towards a Holy God, that we become aware of our faults and unholiness. We say sorry and try to live lives that are more pleasing to God. In the language of our Diocesan focus, this is about developing the depth of our discipleship.

IN - This is to do with our relationship with one another. The Inward focus reminds us to develop our fellowship with other believers, to attend Church, to meet and pray with and for others in the Church family. This is where we build deep and loving friendships and nurture one another in faith. It finds its true meaning as we gather around the communion table meeting God and one another in bread and wine. In the language of our Diocesan focus, this is about developing the number of disciples.

OUT - This is to do with our relationship with the community. The Outward focus reminds us that we live as Christians within society. Recognising that we have received blessing upon blessing from God, we reach out with his love into the wider community to share something of God's blessing. We serve others without paying any attention to faith, gender, race, sexuality, (dis)ability, wealth or poverty or any other label.

In doing so, we hope that some may come to know God's love and turn to him in faith; but we continue to serve whether this happens or not. In the language of our Diocesan focus, this is about showing loving service to the world.

As you journey through Lent towards Easter, may I encourage you to consider how balanced your Christian faith is with regard to these three aspects. If we can do one thing this Lent, let it be to balance our Christian lives to give equal regard to God, one another and the wider world.

If there were a Bible passage that sums this up well, I think Acts 2.42-47 is pretty close:

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

With every blessing, Colin Resch

NEWS FROM THE BELL TOWER



During January we did not have our normal Thursday practice while there were high levels of Covid. Ringing on a Sunday was confined to chiming a single bell.

We were determined to have a ring of 6 bells to mark the 70th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne. We had a wonderful ring, which was all the more pleasing as we hadn't rung together for nearly 2 months. We hope to carry on service ringing when we have enough ringers available from now on. We have also resumed holding practices on a Thursday evening.

A date for your diary -

Bell Celebration Weekend - Saturday 11th /Sunday 12th June

Following the restoration of the bells in 2019, we have wanted to have a celebration event, with displays of the work carried out, and a Sunday Service to include the ceremonial handing over of a bell rope by Whites, the church bell hangers. With the pandemic, this has not been possible so far and so we hope to have this celebration in June alongside the 'Open Church' Saturday afternoon which is already planned on 11th June.

We hope that this village event will inspire some new potential ringers to come forward and learn the ancient art of Church bell ringing. Many young people have learnt to ring as part of the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, whether as a skill or community service. All ages are welcome and we normally meet at 8pm on Thursday evening. However, we could organise a time to suit you if that time is not convenient.

Come and have a go!

Janet Beeby, Tower Captain

01509 890805 janbeeby@btinternet.com

“I know the plans I have for you”

**World Day of Prayer
Friday 4th March 2022**



I am so pleased to report that the Swithland/Woodhouse Eaves group are to hold our usual service this year after the disappointment of having to use Zoom last year.

Our service will be held at the Methodist Church, Main Street, Woodhouse Eaves, on Friday 4th March at 2pm.

All men, women and children are invited and the service will be followed by refreshments.

You are requested to wear face masks where possible and the church will be ventilated.

The World Day of Prayer is celebrated all over the world in 7 regions and this year it was the turn of Christian women of England, Wales and Northern Ireland to prepare the service.

The theme is God's promise found in the book of Jeremiah

“I know the plans I have for you”
focussing on freedom, forgiveness, justice
and God's peace and how this promise
can be a sign of hope for all people.

We look forward to welcoming you.

Olga Harris

*A MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR
GWENETH M GIMSON*

St Leonard's Churchwarden 1972-2008

will take place on

Wednesday 9th March at 2pm

followed by interment of ashes in the churchyard

GWENETH GIMSON

Many of St Leonard's congregation may recall a leaflet written by Gweneth Gimson in 2003 entitled "My Life in Swithland".

Gweneth made reference to the Danvers Tomb and Hind Tomb whose current state of repair was featured in last month's LINK issue by our churchwarden, Chris Watts.

Gwen also wrote about the origins of our Bluebell Service and I hope that you will find the extract from her 2003 leaflet printed on the opposite page both interesting and enlightening.

Mary Toone -Editor



ST LEONARD'S 92nd BLUEBELL SERVICE

at 3pm

on SUNDAY 24TH APRIL

in Swithland Woods by the Great Pit

Join us for this unique celebration of the blessings of Spring.
Revd Colin Resch will be taking our service with the
Syston Brass Band providing the musical accompaniment.

Following the service you are invited to St Leonard's Church
to share tea, coffee and cakes.

All donations will be given to the
Children's Society.



“ The Danvers Tomb, the 18th century tomb of the last Baronet, Sir Joseph Danvers.

On his death, he expressed a wish that his dog ‘Bodyguard’ be buried with him, so the tomb is on the boundary of consecrated ground and the dog is with his master just outside.



The Hind Sisters Tomb, on the left just inside the churchyard.

Henrietta Hind died in 1900 and her sister in 1922. They left, among other things, a legacy of £200 to Swithland Church to be invested and

the income given to any needy parishioner who regularly attended church. The capital was invested in 3.5% stock producing £7 a year. Father was Churchwarden at the time and it was agreed with the Trustees that the recipient received either a bottle of whisky or a bag of coal. Eventually, the needy few died and the income had accumulated, so both the capital and income were transferred to the then Trustees of the Hind Sisters Homes in Cropston to help maintain those buildings.

The Bluebell Service has always been our special service. It was started 77 years ago by the Revd Oliver. The Rotary Club of Leicester and Friends had acquired the wood and given it to the county for public use at all times. It was just a casual word one day in 1928 when the Rector and Father walked out of church and mentioned bluebells. Why not have a service in the woods? And that is how it all began. I know that is true because I was there. Mrs Burrows played the harmonium for the first services and I played afterwards. But, eventually the Salvation Army Band supplied the music, and this year, our 75th, the Ratby Band played. To hear a brass band playing in the open is wonderful and congregations have always sung with vigour.”

Written May 2003 for a talk given to Swithland Mothers’ Union



MOTHERING SUNDAY

*4th Sunday in Lent - March 27th
Service at St Leonard's at 9.30am*

During the 16th century, people in the United Kingdom used to return on the 4th Sunday in Lent for a service in their 'Mother Church', the main church or cathedral in the area. This was either the church where they were baptised or the local parish church or, more often, the nearest cathedral. Anyone who did this was commonly said to have gone 'a-mothering'.

In later times, 'Mothering Sunday' became a day when servants were given the day off to visit their Mother Church, usually with their own mothers and family members. It was often the only time they could all be together.

Children and young people were also given the day off on that date so they could visit their families and would pick wild flowers along the way and place them in the church or give them to their mothers.

Eventually the religious tradition evolved into the 'Mothering Sunday' tradition of giving gifts to mothers.

MOTHERS DAY

Early in the 20th century, Anna Jarvis, in the United States of America, held a memorial service in West Virginia to honour her own mother and all mothers.

In 1914 President Woodrow Wilson made a proclamation establishing the 2nd Sunday of May as the official date in the USA for the observance of a national day to celebrate mothers. This year the date will be Sunday 8th May.



SWITHLAND CHURCH WIVES

**Next meeting Monday 7th March 7.30pm
at the Memorial Hall**

Our speaker is Mark Temple, a well known local historian, who will be showing pictures of 'Old Swithland'. Some of you may have joined a Zoom meeting of the Woodhouse Eaves Local History Group where Mark gave the same presentation. Most of the photographs have come from Joan Leatherland, who has been documenting village life for many decades now. She has an amazing and extensive collection of newspaper cuttings and old photographs.

Partners, members of the Men's Club and guests are welcome to come along and refreshments will be served after the presentation.

The cost of this meeting is included if you have already paid your £5 subscription at the December meeting. As we have to cover the cost of the hiring of the Hall, we are asking guests to pay £2.50 on the night and if you have not paid your subscription, please do so on the night. It should be well worth it.

The Holy Week Service in church is on Monday 11th April at 7.30pm.

We are looking into options for our garden visit in the summer and if anyone would like to join the village Wives Group, please come along and have a chat with us on March 7th. We have 5 meetings each year plus a Gift Service in late November/early December, a dinner in January and a garden visit with a meal in the summer.

Janet Beeby - 890805 Val Capewell - 890551 Sarah May - 890547

SWITHLAND CHURCH MEN'S CLUB

**Next meeting - Wednesday 9th March, 8pm
at the Griffin Inn**

Speaker - Councillor Andrew Brown

"My experiences as the High Sheriff of Rutland"

All members and friends welcome

andrewbrown763@btinternet.com

CHRISTIANS IN THE FOREST

LENT COURSE -

"THE PRAYERS OF JESUS"



This Lent, refresh your relationship with God by exploring the way Jesus Himself prayed to His Father. Focusing on six of the prayers of Jesus leading up to the central events of our faith, encounter the Saviour in a new way and reach new depths of intimacy with God in prayer. Through six sessions, experience more of God's presence as you pray and reflect on Jesus' journey to the cross.

1st March at the Baptist Church, Woodhouse Eaves

8th March via Zoom

15th March at the Methodist Church, Woodhouse Eaves

22nd March via Zoom

29th March at St Leonard's Church, Swithland

5th April via Zoom

All meetings at 7.30pm.

For Zoom meeting ID & passcode contact: garyhlee87@gmail.com

OPEN CHURCH AFTERNOONS 2022

In addition being open for tea and cakes on the afternoon of the Bluebell Service, we shall be welcoming visitors on the following

Saturdays from 2pm to 4pm

May 14th

June 11th

July 9th

August 13th

September 10th



Do please call in to see us and learn more about our church



ST LEONARD'S CHURCH 'FRIDAY CLUB' 9am to 10.30am

Meetings will be held every Friday in March
on the 1st and 8th April and
then closing for the Easter break.

Mums, dads, grandparents and carers -
come and join us for playtime activities, bible stories
songs, a drink and a chat

EVERYONE WELCOME!

How am I to live out my faith?
What could God be saying to me?
What opportunities are there to serve God?

To explore these questions further...

Everyday Calling

with Bishop Saju

Saturday March 26th 10am—3pm

Lunch included

Grand Hall, St Martin's House



Day will include seminars on:

- How to set up a social action project
- Exploring ordained or lay ministry
- How do I hear from God?
- Training opportunities

Time to chat to people in a range of callings eg

- Church Army
- Street Pastors
- Spiritual Directors
- Schools projects

To book a place email:

claire.stapleton@leicestercofe.org
(Please state any dietary needs)



Services

You are invited to join us at any of our services
and be assured of a warm welcome

Wednesday 2nd - Ash Wednesday

7.30pm Holy Communion (CW) Revd Steve Delaforce

Sunday 6th

9.30am Holy Communion (BCP) Revd Colin Resch

Sunday 13th

9.30am Family Worship Revd Colin Resch

Sunday 20th

9.30am Holy Communion (CW) Revd Steve Delaforce

Sunday 27th - Mothering Sunday

9.30am Morning Prayer Olga Harris/Gary Lee



St Leonard's Church

www.stleonardsswithland.org

CHURCHWARDENS

Sally Allen 0116 2375704 and Chris Watts 0116 2123763
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Please forward contributions for The LINK to the Editor: maryselina@hotmail.co.uk