



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

**Sunday 4th**

9.30am Holy Communion (BCP) Revd Colin Resch

**Sunday 11th**

9.30am Family Worship Revd Colin Resch

**Sunday 18th**

9.30am Holy Communion (CW) Revd Steve Delaforce

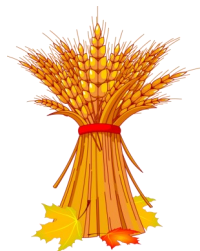
**Sunday 25th**

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) Revd Steve Delaforce

9.30am **HARVEST PRAISE** Olga Harris/Gary Lee

All gifts will be distributed  
to the Soar Valley  
Community Food Project

12.30pm 'Bring and Share' Harvest Lunch  
at Swithland Memorial Hall



**CHURCHWARDENS**

Sally Allen 0116 2375704 and Chris Watts 0116 2123763  
St Leonard's Church, Main Street, Swithland, LE12 8TJ

Please forward contributions for The LINK to the Editor: [maryselina@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:maryselina@hotmail.co.uk)

More information about St Leonard's Services and activities is available on  
our website: [stleonardsswithland.org](http://stleonardsswithland.org)

# THE LINK

## *With St Leonard's in Swithland in September 2022*



A view of Broombriggs farmland showing the first harvest on 31st July  
See article about St Leonard's Lammas Sunday Service

**Revd. Colin Resch**

**Priest in charge of the Mountsorrel Benefice**

**with St Leonard's Swithland**

**4 Rothley Road, Mountsorrel, Loughborough, LE12 7JU**

**Tel/Fax 0116 429 9946 Email [revcolinresch@icloud.com](mailto:revcolinresch@icloud.com)**





I hope you have had a good Summer and were able to enjoy some of the good weather we had - although at times it was a little hot, even for me. With the start of the academic year, September is traditionally a time of endings and new beginnings and this year is going to be no exception.

We mark the end of our main growing season with the traditional celebration of harvest festival when we give thanks to God for his abundant blessing in the provision of food. I hope we might see you at one of our harvest services. Of course, the exceptional weather we have been experiencing has brought its own challenges for our farming community and we take time to offer our prayers and thanksgiving for all those who work in agriculture. Harvest also marks the beginning of a new planting season as ploughing and drilling takes place ready for the next crop.

But this time of year is also a good time for the Church to begin a fresh course of teaching and throughout September and October, we will be running an Alpha Course. Alpha is a course that began in 1977 at a Church called Holy Trinity Brompton in London. It is a course that outlines the core principles of the Christian faith. Alpha is open to everyone, regardless of faith or none, who wants to learn more about the fundamentals of Christianity. It is a course that combines teaching, discussion and questioning so that participants can engage with it at the level they are at. Since its inception, millions of people around the world have tried Alpha with the course having been translated into 112 different languages.

Our Alpha Course will be run at Christ Church, Mountsorrel, beginning at 7pm on Friday 2nd September. Each session includes a meal, so you won't even need to cook for yourself. Why not sign up now using the Eventbrite link on our website: [stleonardsswithland.org/alpha](http://stleonardsswithland.org/alpha). Even better, why not invite a friend and come together. There's no cost to come but any donations towards the cost of food are welcome.

We learn together. I hope you will join in with this new beginning.

*With every blessing, Colin Resch*



**'RIDE AND STRIDE'**

**SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 10TH**



**Help us to raise money for both St Leonard's  
New Gas Meter Fund and  
Leicestershire Historic Churches Trust**

You can participate by cycling, jogging, walking or driving to as many or as few different churches or chapels as you wish - or you can simply be on hand to offer a welcome to those who visit St Leonard's.

Sponsorship forms are available at the back of church together with details of all the churches, etc, that are open to visit. Further information can be obtained from Martin Greenwood - 07756 234201.

**Last year we raised over £900  
Help us to raise the same amount in 2022  
or even more!**



**The  
Alpha  
Course**

Alpha

**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 7pm  
Christ Church Mountsorrel**

Over just a few weeks, the *Alpha Course* considers the Who? What? Why? of the Christian faith in a relaxed, friendly and informal way around the meal table.

*Alpha* is for anyone and everyone

**Give it a try!**

**Sign up now:**

**[stleonardsswithland.org/alpha](http://stleonardsswithland.org/alpha)**



Join us at  
St Leonard's for

AN EVENING OF JAZZ  
STANDARDS

PLUS A BIT MORE!

with the  
**RICHARD KING QUARTET**

**ON FRIDAY 16th SEPTEMBER at 7.30pm  
to raise funds for our Gas Meter Appeal**

Tickets £15 each including wine & canapes

Available from Church, or order by email  
from [maryselina@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:maryselina@hotmail.co.uk)  
or use this QR code



## ST LEONARD'S FIRST LAMMAS SUNDAY SERVICE

31st JULY 2022

Along with Plough Sunday and Rogation, Lammas Sunday is one of the oldest agricultural church celebrations, dating back to Anglo Saxon times. It takes place on or around 1st August and celebrates the first harvest of wheat or corn.

During the service a freshly baked loaf of bread was presented as we thanked God for the first fruits and asked God's blessing on the harvest yet to come. So, Lammas, occurring at the beginning of the harvest, is distinct from our Harvest Festival which happens at the end when everything is safely gathered in.

The Gospel reading was from John's Gospel chapter 21 verses 15-17 and the following is an edited version of my sermon for Lammas Day:

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep" by which he meant, "Feed my people". And he said it three times, which means it is not a request - it is a command.

*Feed my people.*

But there is a problem!

A hunger catastrophe, with us before Covid, has exploded over the last 2 years. The number of people classed as "acutely food insecure" before Covid was 130 million. After Covid this rose to 276 million - including 4.5 million people in this country. Now the number has increased from 276 million to 345 million due to the war in Ukraine.

The largest exporter of wheat in the world is Russia, followed by Canada, USA, France and Ukraine. When the largest and the fifth largest wheat producers are at war there are serious consequences for the rest of the world. Russia's blockade of the Black Sea prevents crucial Ukrainian exports - and although the Russians have signed an agreement to lift the blockade there is no guarantee that they will honour it. Then there are the sanctions - there are no sanctions on the export of Russian wheat but there are sanctions against Russian ships which hampers the movement and supply of Russian wheat.

The war has plunged global food markets into turmoil, with soaring prices, export bans and shortages of basic foods spreading from Ukraine's borders. Africa, the Middle East, Asia and even Latin America are feeling the heat from this conflict.



***But Jesus said feed my people.***

Nearly half of all Nigerians - that's 100 million people - live below the poverty line. Malnutrition and food insecurity has stunted the growth of more than a third of children under 5 years of age.

***But Jesus said feed my people.***

Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya are in the midst of their worst drought in 40 years. The World Food Programme has warned that 20 million people in the region could go hungry because of drought by the end of the year. Children are already dying. UNICEF last year fed an almost unbelievable 336 million children who were at risk of malnutrition and has warned that the Ukraine conflict is hindering its ability to respond this year.

***But Jesus said feed my people.***

The world's largest importer of wheat is Egypt! Why does Egypt, which traditionally has produced wheat in abundance, need to import so much grain? The answer is simple. They have been steadily selling off their farmland to build houses on. Just as we are doing in this country!

Russia and Ukraine supplied more than 80% of Egypt's wheat imports before the war, so it was immediately affected by supply disruptions. Although famine is not yet a concern, there are worries about the cost for the government to "maintain their social safety net programmes and its ability to avoid political instability". High food prices were amongst the economic woes that contributed to the 2011 Arab Spring revolutions.

In Yemen the World Food Programme is providing food for 13 million people. There a long civil war has driven up food and fuel prices and caused a widespread hunger crisis.

At a time when more people around the world require aid, the cost of providing it has spiralled and the war in Ukraine has interrupted supplies. David Beasley, director of the World Food Programme has said "We're now having to decide which children eat, and which children don't eat, which children live, and which children die."

What a depressing catalogue of catastrophe and conflict - and I have only mentioned a half a dozen countries - there are many, many more in similar positions of acute hunger. Afghanistan for instance.

***But Jesus said feed my people.***

So what are we to do?

I'd like to offer four things for us to consider doing.

1. Write to your member of parliament and to our new prime minister. Overseas Aid will inevitably come under pressure when budgets are being looked at, but it is essential to the lives of millions of people that we try to restore the 3 billion pounds of aid that was cut last year.
2. Support financially, an aid agency - UNICEF, Christian Aid or The World Food Programme for instance. If like me you are already supporting overseas aid charities consider increasing that support.
3. Don't forget our local food banks. As I mentioned earlier, there are at least 4.5 million people in this country who suffer food poverty.
4. Pray - pray that the Russian agreement to let grain ships through the Black Sea will hold. Pray that the rich nations will be generous to those unable to feed themselves.

You may already be thinking of other ways in which you can help.

But help we must.

Jesus said feed my people - it wasn't a request - it was a command.

***Gary Lee***



## ***PRAYER NETWORK***

Prayer is one of the foundations of the Christian Faith.  
In prayer Christian believers speak directly to and with God.

We believe that God delights to hear our prayers,  
and that prayer can make a difference.

We have a small group of Church members  
who have committed to pray for others.

If you would like prayer for yourself, or someone else, please visit our  
website where you will be able to leave your details.

Click on the heading **Worship & Prayer** and the subheading  
**Ask for a Prayer** will give you all the information you need.

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





Join us for the final  
**OPEN CHURCH AFTERNOON OF 2022**

on  
**September 10th September - our 'Ride & Stride' Day  
from 2pm to 4pm**

Come and learn more about our historical church  
and churchyard or just enjoy its peace and tranquillity.  
Free book stall. Tea, coffee, drinks and cakes available.  
You will be made very welcome.

### *CHRISTIANS IN THE FOREST*

#### *AUTUMN COURSE DATES*

#### *'PAUL'S LETTER TO THE GALATIANS'*



Please join us for an informal discussion of Paul's letter to the Galatians  
and how it informs our faith and our daily lives.

**20th September at St Leonard's Church, Swithland**

27th September at the Methodist Church, Woodhouse Eaves

**4th October at Leonard's Church, Swithland**

**11th October at St Leonard's Church, Swithland**

18th October at the Methodist Church, Woodhouse Eaves

**25th October at St Leonard's Church, Swithland**

1st November at the Methodist Church, Woodhouse Eaves

**All meetings at 7.15pm for tea, coffee and biscuits  
7.30pm for study start**

**For further information contact Gary at [garyhlee87@gmail.com](mailto:garyhlee87@gmail.com)  
or telephone 01509 890642.**

### *"ORDINARY TIME"*

*The time between Trinity and Advent in the  
Church Calendar which includes our  
Harvest Festival on Sunday 25th September*

The church at this time of the year is in 'Ordinary Time' or 'Trinity' which is numbered through the period, Trinity 1 to about 25, depending on how many Sundays there are before Advent. This time starts on Trinity Sunday (the Sunday after Pentecost) and continues to Christ the King Sunday (the Sunday before Advent). Thus, from approximately June through to November is called 'Ordinary Time', about half of the liturgical year.

Even Christians who don't formally follow a liturgical calendar take at least some time out of the year to reflect about Christ's incarnation at Christmas, his resurrection at Easter, his victorious Ascension into Heaven, and the manifold gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Each of these events in the life of Christ and his church has forever changed both our individual lives and the course of human history. 'Ordinary Time' is a logical continuation which allows us to contemplate these realities and see them at work in our daily lives.

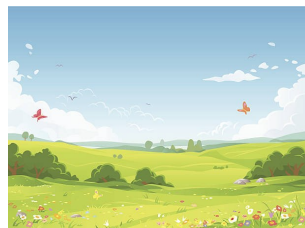
St Leonard's church will celebrate Harvest Festival in September during this time. The modern British tradition of celebrating the Harvest Festival in churches began in 1843 when the Revd Robert Hawker invited parishioners to a special thanksgiving service at his church in Cornwall. Hymns such as 'We plough the fields and scatter', 'Come ye thankful people come' and 'All things bright and beautiful' made this a popular idea of a harvest festival and spread the annual custom of decorating churches with home-grown produce for the Harvest Festival service.

As British people have come to rely less heavily on home-grown produce, there has been a shift in emphasis in many Harvest Festival celebrations. Increasingly churches have linked Harvest with an awareness of, and concern for, people in the developing world for whom growing crops of sufficient quality and quantity remains a struggle, and in this country food poverty has become more common. St Leonard's uses this service as a Gift Service and all produce donated, including packaged food, is distributed to the local Soar Valley Community Food Project.

*Chris Watts, Churchwarden.*

**ST LEONARD'S  
AUTUMN WALK IN  
COSSINGTON MEADOWS**

**Monday 10th October at 10.30am**



You are invited  
to join members of our congregation  
on our second organised walk with  
with Jerry Griffiths, a local Christian Guide.

The walk will last for approximately one hour  
and will give everyone the opportunity for  
conversation, observation, quiet reflection and prayer.

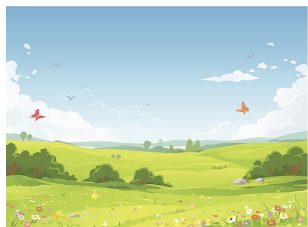
We shall gather at the entrance to Cossington Meadows  
at 10.30am and return to St Leonard's Church  
for soup and bread rolls.

We are fortunate to have such a beautiful area  
so nearby and we look forward to  
sharing it with you.

No need to book, just come along.

Free roadside parking

For further information email  
[maryselina@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:maryselina@hotmail.co.uk)



***Olga Harris - Memories!***

17th July was a very special day when I celebrated my 90th birthday and I was so glad that it fell on a Sunday when I was attending St Leonard's.

My earliest memory of worshipping here was in 1940 when a special Day of Prayer was held during a bad period in WW11 and since then it has been 'my church'. I couldn't wait to be old enough to join the choir in which I sang for over 30 years. Some of my 80 or so years have involved Mothers' Union, altar serving, leading services as well as mundane things like washing the linen every week and the mammoth task of washing the altar cloth. Washing is easy but ironing is a nightmare - yards and yards of it!

There have been happy times and sad times during these years - weddings, funerals, baptisms, as there will be for many years to come, but in the meantime I would like to thank the church for arranging a beautiful birthday cake and providing the Prosecco so that everyone could join in my **CELEBRATION!**



*Join us for our*

***HARVEST LUNCH***

**SUNDAY 25th SEPTEMBER**  
at the Memorial Hall at 12.30pm



***EVERYONE WELCOME!***

Our Harvest Lunch will once again be a '**Bring and Share**' lunch.

If you would like to attend, please either use the  
contact details below or add your name to the  
list at the back of the church.

You will then be contacted to confirm your choice  
of food to bring along.

Geraldine Mason 0116 2672360  
[geraldinemason212@btinternet.com](mailto:geraldinemason212@btinternet.com)

## ST LEONARD'S CHURCH

### 'FRIDAY CLUB'

9am to 10.30am

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

Meetings re-commence on

**2nd September**

and continue each week in termtime.



**Swithland**  
**FLOWER & VEGETABLE**  
*Show 2022*

**FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY...**  
FLOWER & VEGETABLE EXHIBITS  
ARTS & CRAFTS EXHIBITS  
HOME PRODUCE EXHIBITS  
CHILDREN'S EXHIBITS  
PLANT SALES,  
TOMBOLA & AUCTION

**SATURDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER**  
AT THE GRIFFIN INN AND SWITHLAND SCHOOL  
Show opened by celebrity slimming guru, Rosemary Conley  
ALL PROCEEDS DONATED TO RAINBOWS, LOROS & OTHER LOCAL CHARITIES

## Launde Abbey

### AUTUMN

### CLASSICAL CONCERTS

#### September 4th **TESSERAÉ**

Four Ladies singing group, part of Harborough Singers  
Songs and music on the Chapel Organ

#### October 2nd **MARK ASHFORD**

Classical guitar

#### November 6th **ALLORA QUARTET**

Flute and strings led by Tim Taylorson.

All concerts are on Sundays at 3.00pm followed by cream teas at 4.15pm.

**Book with Launde Abbey 01572 717254**

## FROM ST LEONARD'S CHURCH REGISTERS - 2022

### Weddings

2nd April	Mark Warner and Faye Wood
9th April	Aaron Griffin and Rebecca Chamberlain
21st April	Kumbo Munthall and Lucy McCarthy
9th July	Jon Wright and Carly Tomlinson
22nd July	Matthew Coring and Stacey Phillips

### Burials

8th April	Rosalind Taylor
19th April	Wendy North

### Burial of Ashes

24th March	Donald Pilcher
3rd May	Barbara Hercock
5th July	Hugh Dixon
9th July	Yvonne Woolaston

### Funeral Service

6th July	Walter Bentley
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### Thanksgiving Service

7th July	William Howlett
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## Sponsoring our Floodlighting and Church Flowers

The beautiful flowers in church from August 14th were given by  
Lizette Pugh in memory of  
'Beloved David - remembered with love as ever'.

If you too would like to remember a loved one  
or celebrate any special occasion,  
birthday or anniversary  
by sponsoring our floodlighting or flowers,  
please speak to one of our churchwardens,  
Sally or Chris.





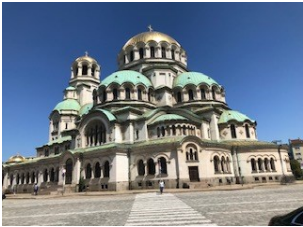
## **Bulgaria, and the survival of Christianity in the face of oppression**

In June, Annette and I visited Bulgaria as independent travellers. We based ourselves in the capital, Sofia, but we went on several small group tours. These included trips to the Rila Monastery, and to the second city of Plovdiv with its charming old town and magnificent Roman remains.



Rila Monastery

Bulgaria is a Balkan nation with diverse terrain encompassing the Black Sea coastline, a mountainous interior, the River Danube, the capital city of Sofia; and boasting a rich heritage of traditional dance, music, costume and crafts. It is in fact the oldest country in Europe, founded in 681 AD. Prior to this the area was inhabited by Thracians, followed by Roman rule, and the inward migration of Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians. Christianity, already present to some degree under the Romans, was formally imposed during the reign of Boris 1 (852-888 AD). The country has a population of just 6.9 million; ethnically 77% are Bulgarian, 8% Turkish, and 4% Roma (gypsies). Famous Bulgarians include Spartacus, in the Thracian period; and Georgi Markov, poisoned by a pellet shot from an umbrella on Waterloo Bridge, London, in 1977, for revealing too many details of the lifestyle of the political elite.



Alexander Nevsky Orthodox Cathedral

The country abounds with beautiful churches and monasteries, many frescoes, and with some churches dating back to the 4th century. Among the most impressive are the Alexander Nevsky Orthodox Cathedral in Sofia, completed in 1912, and the Rila Monastery, founded in the 10th century.

Yet Christianity has had to fight for its survival. In 1389 the country was invaded and defeated by the Islamic Ottoman Turks whose rule lasted until 1878. Christians were never given equality of status with Muslims. Non-Muslims were discriminated against in a variety of ways: they paid higher taxes; Christian churches could not be as high as mosques; and Muslim law was always superior to any other. There was also the hated *devshirme*, whereby some Christian boys aged 7-14 were taken from their families to be converted to Islam and given a rigorous education and military training in Turkey, becoming *janissaries*, the elite of the Ottoman army.

Christianity declined, with many converting to Islam for an easier life, or being subject to violent forced conversion. In the early years after the conquest the Ottomans forbade the building or rebuilding of churches. Later this was relaxed.

The Ottoman empire declined from the 1680s with the advance of the Habsburgs, and from it emerged the seeds of the Bulgarian National Revival. Bulgaria was finally liberated in 1878, and achieved statehood with its own Bulgarian Orthodox Church, independent of that of Greece.

After 1944 the communists took power. Local committees conducted an implacable war against the old order - policemen, teachers and priests being prominent among them. Some were simply murdered; others were sentenced to death or to long periods in labour camps by the new “people’s courts”. The Orthodox Church and other churches were “brought into line”, and subjugated to the state, with many churches turned into museums or closed entirely. 15 protestant pastors were put on trial, convicted and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

In 1989 the Berlin Wall fell, and Zhivkov, the Bulgarian dictator resigned the next day. Thus began the dismantling of the apparatus of totalitarianism. Almost 60% of the population are now registered as belonging to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, and although church attendance is not high, except for special religious occasions, the church is free, having survived a turbulent history.

Sofia is named after Saint Sophia, patron saint of wisdom and a Christian martyr. She and her three daughters, Faith, Hope and Love, were taken before Hadrian and asked to worship another god. The daughters remained steadfast to their faith, were tortured and beheaded. Saint Sophia died after 3 days of praying at their graves. A large copper and bronze statue of Sophia now dominates central Sofia. How appropriate that this stands in the very spot once occupied by a statue of Lenin.



Interior of Church of St Sophia

*Clive Hilton*