



***FESTIVE SEASON SERVICES AT  
ST LEONARD'S CHURCH***

*We look forward to welcoming you*



**DECEMBER SERVICES**

**Sunday 3rd - Advent 1**

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
9.30am Holy Communion (CW)  
and Gift Service  
4.00pm Service of Light

**Sunday 10th - Advent 2**

9.30am Family Crib Service

**Wednesday 13th**

7.00pm Jazz Carol Service

**Sunday 17th - Advent 3**

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
9.30am Holy Communion (CW)  
4.00pm Service of Nine Lessons  
and Carols

**Sunday 24th - Christmas Eve**

4.00pm Christingle Service

**Monday 25th**

**CHRISTMAS DAY**

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
9.30am Family Holy Communion

**Sunday 31st**

9.30am Sing a Song of Christmas

**JANUARY SERVICES**

**Sunday 7th**

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
9.30am Holy Communion (CW)

**Sunday 14th**

9.30am Family Worship

**Sunday 21st**

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
9.30am Holy Communion (CW)

**Sunday 28th**

9.30am Candlemas Sunday



**For more information about  
our services and activities  
visit our website at  
[stleonardsswithland.org](http://stleonardsswithland.org)**

**CHURCHWARDENS**

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

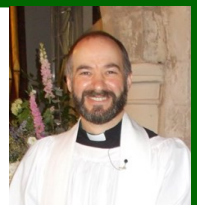
# THE LINK

*With St Leonard's in Swithland in  
December 2023 & January 2024*



**The Reverend Colin Resch**

Priest in charge of the Mountsorrel Benefice  
& Acting Rector, St Leonard's Swithland  
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## Fifteen Minutes Every Day

Have you ever sat with someone and, after a while, realised they have been speaking but you haven't heard a single word? I know I do this, because my wife tells me so. In fact, I have made it quite a skill. I can watch and listen to the weather forecast and, at the end, still not know what the weather is likely to be tomorrow. Sometimes in our Christian discipleship we can be a little like this with God. We know God is speaking to us but we often close our ears to what he says so that we can listen to the many other voices in the world around us.



I want to lay down a challenge to each of us to take a small amount of time every day to sit with God and listen to what he has to say to us. I will call this challenge 'Fifteen Minutes Every Day'. It doesn't matter when we take the fifteen minutes, you might like to do this first thing in the morning; when you sit down with a cuppa mid-morning or mid-afternoon; for you it might be just before bed. Personally, my fifteen minutes with God is during breakfast.

One of the principal ways that God speaks to us is through his Word - The Bible. So, starting in the New Year, on 1st January, I am going to encourage us, as a Church, to spend fifteen minutes reading through the entire Bible in one year. Every day from 1st January to 30th December we will read something from the Old Testament, something from the New Testament and a psalm or a proverb. The reading plan will be included in The LINK each month and you can also go to [bible.com/reading-plans/19038](https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/19038) and read online or follow the instructions to download the app to your phone or pc.

Before you begin, say a short prayer. Ask God to speak to you as you read his word. Then read. At the end of the reading, sit quietly and see if any thoughts come into your mind - maybe God has something to say to you from what you have read; maybe you will be prompted to pray for a particular person or situation. At the end of your time, thank God for guiding you through your fifteen minutes and ask him to remain with you over the next 24 hours until you sit together again.

A key Bible verse to encourage your prayer is this from 1 Samuel 3.10 "The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, 'Samuel! Samuel!' Then Samuel said, 'Speak, for your servant is listening.'"

**May God bless you this Christmas time and New Year, Colin Resch**



ST LEONARD'S CHURCH 'FRIDAY CLUB'  
WILL RE-OPEN AFTER CHRISTMAS  
on **JANUARY 12th** from **9am to 10.30am**  
Join us for playtime activities, bible stories,  
songs, a drink and a chat  
**EVERYONE WELCOME!**

### *RIDE AND STRIDE 2023*

This year those participating from St Leonard's Church raised £599 - a little lower than in previous years, but still an excellent result indeed!

As has been explained, half of the money raised goes to St Leonard's and the other half to the Leicestershire Historic Churches Trust. £299.50 will be put towards pastoral care or the fabric of our church and the share retained by the Trust will be distributed by the Trustees to aid churches, chapels and meeting houses in their never-ending need to keep up with the ever increasing costs of repairs and maintenance.

Many thanks to those that participated, riding, driving or walking, and to those who manned the church during the day - sometimes a lonely task but as you see from the result, very rewarding.

Do join us once again in **Ride and Stride** next year which will be held on **Saturday September 14th 2024.**

**Martin Greenwood**

### *Sunday 3rd December at 9.30 am - Gift Service*

Gifts will go to the Soar Valley Food Bank and as it is Christmas, please can you give some treats e.g. Christmas puddings, chocolate biscuits, mince pies, tinned fruit, etc, and please check there is a longish date on the items. If you would like to prepare a filled shoe box for the Y Centre, this link gives items to put in it [www.ymcaleics.org.uk/support-us/christmas](https://www.ymcaleics.org.uk/support-us/christmas) or if you prefer to make a donation, details are on the website. Boxes can be left in the church porch at any time or be dropped off at 126 Main Street, Wren Cottage or Hall Farm.

## FIFTEEN MINUTES A DAY - Bible in a Year - 365-day Reading Plan

### January 2024

- 1 Genesis 1, Genesis 2:1-17, Matthew 1:1-25, Psalm 1:1-6
- 2 Genesis 2:18-25, Genesis 3, Genesis 4:1-16, Matthew 2:1-18, Psalm 2:1-12
- 3 Genesis 4:17-26, Genesis 5, Genesis 6, Matthew 2:19-23, Matthew 3, Psalm 3:1-8
- 4 Genesis 7, Genesis 8, Genesis 9:1-17, Matthew 4:1-22, Proverbs 1:1-7
- 5 Genesis 9:18-29, Genesis 10, Genesis 11:1-9, Matthew 4:23-25, Matthew 5:1-20, Psalm 4:1-8
- 6 Genesis 11:10-32, Genesis 12, Genesis 13, Matthew 5:21-42, Psalm 5:1-12
- 7 Genesis 14, Genesis 15, Genesis 16, Matthew 5:43-48, Matthew 6:1-24, Psalm 6
- 8 Genesis 17, Genesis 18, Matthew 6:25-34, Matthew 7:1-23, Proverbs 1:8-19
- 9 Genesis 19, Genesis 20:1-18, Matthew 7:24-29, Matthew 8:1-22 Psalm 7:1-9
- 10 Genesis 21, Genesis 22, Genesis 23, Matthew 8:23-34, Matthew 9:1-13, Psalm 7:10-17
- 11 Genesis 24:1-67, Matthew 9:14-38, Psalm 8:1-9
- 12 Genesis 25, Genesis 26, Matthew 10:1-31, Proverbs 1:20-33
- 13 Genesis 27, Genesis 28:1-22, Matthew 10:32-42, Matthew 11:1-15, Psalm 9:1-6
- 14 Genesis 29, Genesis 30, Matthew 11:16-30, Psalm 9:7-12
- 15 Genesis 31:1-55, Matthew 12:1-21, Psalm 9:13-20
- 16 Genesis 32, Genesis 33, Matthew 12:22-45, Proverbs 2:1-11
- 17 Genesis 34, Genesis 35, Matthew 12:46-50, Matthew 13:1-17, Psalm 10:1-11
- 18 Genesis 36, Genesis 37, Matthew 13:18-35, Psalm 10:12-18
- 19 Genesis 38, Genesis 39, Matthew 13:36-58, Psalm 11:1-7
- 20 Genesis 40, Genesis 41:1-40, Matthew 14:1-21, Proverbs 2:12-22
- 21 Genesis 41:41-57, Genesis 42, Matthew 14:22-36, Matthew 15:1-9, Psalm 12:1-8
- 22 Genesis 43, Genesis 44, Matthew 15:10-39, Psalm 13:1-6
- 23 Genesis 45, Genesis 46, Genesis 47:1-12, Matthew 16:1-20, Psalm 14:1-7
- 24 Genesis 47:13-31, Genesis 48, Matthew 16:21-28, Matthew 17:1-13 Proverbs 3:1-10
- 25 Genesis 49, Genesis 50, Matthew 17:14-27, Matthew 18:1-9, Psalm 15:1-5
- 26 Job 1, Job 2, Job 3, Matthew 18:10-35, Psalm 16:1-11
- 27 Job 4, Job 5, Job 6, Job 7, Matthew 19:1-15, Psalm 17:1-5
- 28 Job 8, Job 9, Job 10, Matthew 19:16-30, Proverbs 3:11-20
- 29 Job 11, Job 12, Job 13, Job 14, Matthew 20:1-19, Psalm 17:6-12
- 30 Job 15, Job 16, Job 17, Job 18, Matthew 20:20-34, Psalm 17:13-15
- 31 Job 19, Job 20, Job 21, Matthew 21:1-17, Psalm 18:1-6

## Come and see 100's of Angels at our Advent Angel Festival in St Leonard's Church on 1st - 3rd December



### Friday 1st December

Festival opens from 11am to 5pm - see the Angels that have flown in with messages for everyone.

Share coffee, tea and angel cake with us.

**7pm** Pre-concert talk given by Linda Burgh.

**7.30pm AN EVENING OF LIVE MUSIC** to celebrate Angels and Light. Free entry. Wine and soft drinks served in the interval.

### Saturday 2nd December

Church open from 10am to 5pm to view Angels. Plus coffee, tea and angel cake.

### Sunday 3rd December

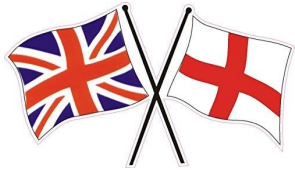
**8am** Holy Communion (BCP)

**9.30am** Holy Communion (CW)

**4pm** Closing Festival Service of Light.

Church open all day to view Angels.

**Free entry each day: Collection in aid of Cancer Research UK and St Leonard's Church**



## FLAG DAYS

When I took over as 'Keeper of the Flag' from Willoughby Garton, I was given a list of the days when the St George's flag should be flown from the tower at St Leonard's. These were important days in the life of the church and also national days.

At the bottom of the list was the directive that 'wherever possible (practical) the flag should be raised at dawn and lowered at dusk'!! It went on to say that in practice in the past, this has often meant raising it late the day before and lowering it early the next day. As you can imagine, climbing on to the tower roof is not for the fainthearted.

During November the flag was raised for the Feast of St Leonard on the 6th, Remembrance Sunday on the 12th and the King's birthday on the 14th. The flag will be flying for Christmas Day and for Epiphany on 6th January.

Following the death of HM the Queen and the Coronation of King Charles, we also have a Union Jack which can be raised on national occasions.

### **Brian Beeby - Keeper of the Flag**

**St Leonard's prepares to welcome in the  
New Year again with our Annual  
'Sing a Song of Christmas' Service  
at 9.30am on 31st December**



**Come and sing your favourite carols and learn about their remarkable individual histories.**

**With readings and poetry it is sure to be a joyful occasion which will end with sparkling wine and Christmas cake!**

## **CHRISTIANS IN THE FOREST**

The Advent Course is "**A Strange Christmas**" by Krish Kandiah. What could be more familiar than Christmas? And yet .. what could be stranger than God's plan for salvation?



**28th November**, "Strange Wait" at the Methodist Church, Woodhouse Eaves - Leader Gary

**5th December**, "Strange Worship" at St Leonard's Church, Swithland - Leader - Hilary

**12th December**, "Strange Welcome" at the Methodist Church, Woodhouse Eaves - Leader Gary

**19th December**, "Strange Wisdom" at St Leonard's Church, Swithland - Leader Hilary

**PLEASE NOTE: ALL ADVENT COURSE MEETINGS AT THE EARLIER TIME OF 2.30pm**

The New Year Course is "**The Prayers of Jesus - Hearing His Heartbeat**" by Peter Hicks. In addition everyone is invited to bring one prayer each week - either self-written or from a book of prayers - so that week by week through January we can 'pray in' the New Year.

**2nd January**, "Abba Father" at the Methodist Church, Woodhouse Eaves Leader Jerry

**9th January**, "Prayers Jesus Didn't Pray" at St Leonard's Church, Swithland - Leader Gary

**16th January**, "The Lord's Prayer" at the Methodist Church, Woodhouse Eaves - Leader Hilary

**23rd January**, "Blessing" at St Leonard's Church, Swithland - Leader Chris

**30th January**, "Praying for Joy" at the Methodist Church, Woodhouse Eaves - Leader Gary

**WE RETURN TO OUR USUAL MEETING TIME OF 7.15pm FOR 7.30pm**

For further information contact Gary Lee - [garyhlee87@gmail.com](mailto:garyhlee87@gmail.com)

## SWITHLAND CHURCH WOMEN'S GROUP

**Sunday 3rd December will be our Gift Service  
at 9.30am at St Leonard's Church**  
(please see page 11 for more details regarding suitable gifts)

Following this our meetings are on the first Monday  
of each month at 7.30 pm in the Memorial Hall

4th December - **"The Shanty Folk"** - Christmas Party  
with mulled wine & mince pies

January 2024 - **"New Year Dinner"** - date & venue tbc

5th February - **"The Life & Crimes of Agatha Christie"**  
Speaker, Mark Temple

4th March - **"The Shuttlewood Clarke Foundation"**  
Speaker, Di Beste

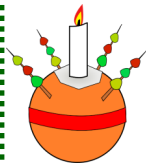
**Partners and friends are always welcome to come along**

Sarah May 890547 - Val Capewell 890551 - Janet Beeby 890805

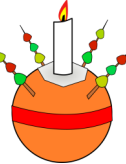


### Join us on CHRISTMAS EVE for our CHRISTINGLE SERVICE

**Sunday 24th December at 4pm**  
to celebrate the coming of Christ - the light in our world



This is always a joyful occasion particularly  
enjoyed by children and a wonderful  
way to prepare for Christmas Day



A candle - to represent Christ

An orange - to represent the world

A red ribbon - to represent the love and blood of Christ

Fruits and sweets on four cocktail sticks -  
to represent the four seasons and God's love  
in providing the fruits of the earth

A Stellar Candlelit Service of

9 Jazz Carols and

Traditional Lessons

Wednesday 13th December at 7pm

at St Leonard's Church



Jazz played by "J4J Jazz Quintet"

with heavenly voices drawn from Charnwood Forest

Mulled wine and mince pies to follow

All donations for The Children's Society



For further information contact

The Rev'd Steve Delaforce

steve.delaforce@gmail.com

## Captain Robert Gee VC, MC and MP



Having read in last month's LINK that the Swithland War Memorial was unveiled by Captain Robert Gee VC, MC, MP, I wondered who he was. The name Gee was well known in this area as a couple of Gees lived on Swithland Lane. My research found there was no connection, but he did come from Leicester and what a remarkable and brave man he was.

Robert Gee was born in 1876 in Metcalf Street Leicester which was one of the poorest areas of the city. His parents were both Framework Knitters and both died when Robert was only 11, probably due to their work being very unhealthy. Now being an orphan, he was sent to the Leicester Union Workhouse and after, to the orphanage, Countesthorpe Cottage Homes.

In 1893 he joined the army aged 17, the 4th Queens Own Hussars, but after six months went Absent without Leave. The day after, he joined another Regiment, 2nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) under another name. This was discovered and he was tried for fraudulent enlistment. Despite this poor start, he rose quickly through the ranks to Warrant Officer in 1911 and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in 1915.

Robert was sent with the Battalion to Gallipoli but within a few days was promoted to Acting Captain. On November 26th 1915 he survived the flooding at Suvla Bay which killed many men, both British and Turkish, who were drowned in their trenches or died of frostbite. Subsequently his Battalion was withdrawn to Egypt in January 1916.

Robert's next significant action was on the Somme. On the first day of the battle of the Somme the Battalion attacked Beaumont Hamel. Here he was severely wounded and evacuated back to the UK. During the battle his actions had been noted, for which he was subsequently awarded the Military Cross. His citation read "*For conspicuous gallantry in action. He encouraged his men during the attack by fearlessly exposing himself and cheering them on. When wounded he refused to retire and urged his men on till, after being blown in the air by a shell, he was carried in, half unconscious*". Eight months later Robert returned to France and was again wounded but returned to duty within a fortnight.

In November 1871 Robert saw action in the Battle of Cambria. During a German counter attack he was captured by 2 German soldiers but with the help of his Orderly, he managed to escape. Following this, he took control

of available soldiers and captured a German machine gun post resulting in 8 of the enemy being killed. For this action Robert received the Victoria Cross, the highest award for gallantry. His citation read "*For most conspicuous bravery, initiative and determination when attacked by a strong enemy force pierced our line and captured a Brigade Headquarters and ammunition dump. Capt Gee finding himself a prisoner killed one of the enemy with his spiked stick and succeeded in escaping. He then organised a party of the Brigade Staff, with which he attacked the enemy fiercely, closely followed by two Companies of Infantry. By his own personal bravery and prompt action, he, aided by his orderlies, cleared the locality. Capt Gee established a defensive flank on the outskirts of the village, then finding that an enemy machine gun was still in action, with a revolver in each hand and followed by one man, he rushed and captured the gun killing eight of the crew. At this time he was wounded, but refused to have the wound dressed until he was satisfied that the defence was organised*".

It was only after this action Robert allowed himself to be taken to an aid station for treatment for the gunshot wound and repatriation to UK. Four months later in April 1918 he returned to France but later had to be evacuated home as a result of his previous injuries.

Robert's military career ended in 1920 after he was chosen as one of the 100 servicemen who formed the Honour Guard at the internment of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey on November 11th 1920.

Recovered from his wounds, and no longer an active member of the Army, Robert decided to enter politics. In December 1918 he stood to be a Member of Parliament for Consett in County Durham, but was narrowly defeated. In March 1921 he became a Unionist Member of Parliament for Woolwich East after defeating Ramsay MacDonald who was later to become a leader of the Labour Party. Later he became MP for Bosworth, Leicestershire, before giving up politics and going to live in Australia. He died in 1960 aged 84.

Captain Robert Gee, having experienced the horrors of war and such daring deeds, was a most obvious person to unveil the Memorial in Swithland which he did on Sunday 4th December 1921. A paving stone was laid in Leicester Town Hall Square in 2018 on the centenary of his Victoria Cross winning actions, and in 2021 a Green Plaque was unveiled in his memory at the Bosworth Conservative Association Building on Priory Walk, Hinckley.

**Martin Greenwood**