



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

Sunday 7th

8am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Revd Steve Delaforce
9.30am	Holy Communion (CW)	Revd Colin Resch
10.30am	ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING - See page 11	

Sunday 14th

9.30am	Family Worship (CW) 'The Unjust Judge'	Revd Colin Resch
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Sunday 21st

8am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Revd Steve Delaforce
9.30am	Holy Communion (CW)	Revd Steve Delaforce

Sunday 28th

9.30am	Sunday Xtra	Bishop Saju (Bishop of Loughborough) Olga Harris
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St Leonard's Church

www.stleonardsswithland.org

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

THE LINK

*With St Leonard's in Swithland
in April 2024*



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 revcolinresch@mountsorrelchurch.org



Alleluia! Jesus Lives.

Greetings to you in the name of the risen Lord Jesus Christ. As we enter into this season of Easter, we rejoice again in the truth that Jesus is alive. We celebrate the good news that death could not defeat the Son of the Living God.

Recent information based on the 2021 Census taken from the Office for National Statistics, tells us that 528 people live in the St Leonard's parish, and 57.2% of you openly declared yourselves to be a Christian. This is good news for me because it means that my usual Sunday attendance in Church should be (give or take) about three hundred people including sixty-five children and teenagers. If you've been to Church recently, you will not be surprised to know that we don't usually have a congregation of three hundred. Maybe that's just as well because we can only seat about one hundred and twenty in the Church. But I would love to know what it is that keeps you away.

Further research undertaken by the *Talking Jesus* project reveals that over 43% of the general population believe that the resurrection of Jesus from the dead was a real event that actually took place. I wonder if you would count yourself in that number. Dead people don't usually come back to life, so let me ask you a question: if you truly believe that Jesus rose from the dead (and statistically more than two hundred of you do), why would you not want to acknowledge that by being part of our Church? Again, I would really be interested in your thoughts.

I have been a Christian for about as long as I can remember and I know the positive difference that having a living faith can make so I am passionate about sharing my faith experience with others. If, like me, you are happy to talk about your faith with others, most of your neighbours are on your side and willing to listen.

I long for people to come into a vibrant, living faith with the risen Lord Jesus. He rose that first Easter morning, and he still lives today calling men, women and children to give their lives to him. I wonder if you have responded to his call. If not, what is stopping you from doing so today?

With every blessing, Colin Resch



ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING SUNDAY 7th APRIL

The meeting will follow our morning service and take place at 10.30am. Parishioners will appoint churchwardens and elect three members of the Church to serve on St Leonard's Parochial Church Council (PCC).

We will receive the Annual Report and answer any questions you may have about the life of our church here in Swithland.

Nomination forms are available in the church porch and completed forms can be left in church or given to Rev. Resch before the meeting commences.

PLEASE JOIN THE MEETING AND HAVE YOUR SAY

ST LEONARD'S FRIDAY CLUB

Friday Club is a group with a Christian ethos.

It is for parents and guardians with babies and toddlers.

There is coffee and chat, storytime with a short prayer
lots of playtime and singing too.

It is held every Friday in term time from 9am to 10.30am

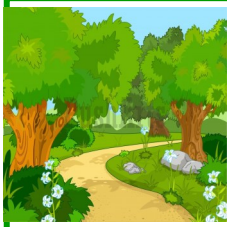


Everyone welcome



“ FIFTEEN MINUTES READINGS ”

If you are using our daily 'Fifteen Minutes Readings' and would like to receive these for the month of April, please email the Editor - maryselina@hotmail.co.uk who will forward them to you.



Christians in the Forest Spring/Summer Course
1, 2 & 3 John: Walking in the Truth
by Claire Musters

John was the disciple that Jesus loved, and as such, he was privileged to have walked and talked with Him. In these three letters, John encourages his readers with the invitation for a similar dynamic relationship with Jesus. This encouragement is something we continue to need today so we hope that this study will spur you on as we work our way through it.

Course venues and dates are as follows:

16th April - at St Leonard's Church, Swithland

23rd April - at the Methodist Church, Woodhouse Eaves

30th April - at St Leonard's Church, Swithland

7th May - at the Methodist Church, Woodhouse Eaves

14th May - at St Leonard's Church, Swithland

21st May - at the Methodist Church, Woodhouse Eaves

28th May - at St Leonard's Church, Swithland

All meetings 7.15pm for tea & coffee and 7.30pm study start.

Contact garyhlee87@gmail.com for further details.

Swithland Memorial Hall Management Committee

COMMUNITY COFFEE MORNING

Our first community coffee morning was held at the Memorial Hall on Saturday 16th March and was a great success.

Villagers old and new were treated to a large array of delicious cakes and everyone said it was good to meet new people as well as old friends.

As several villagers said they were unable to come along on this occasion, we hope to hold another get together in the next few months.

Please contact Margaret Hardwicke
 01509 890354 for any information
 regarding booking the Memorial Hall.



ST LEONARD'S CHURCH
BLUEBELL SERVICE

is at 3pm

on SUNDAY 5th MAY

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
 Kibworth 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 **Exaireo Trust**
 a Christian charity based in Loughborough
 to support the homeless.





WORLD DAY OF PRAYER



The first Friday in March each year is always a day set aside as a special annual celebration worldwide. Locally St Leonard's joins with Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists and Roman Catholics from Swithland, Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves and takes turns in hosting the service. It was our privilege this year to do that with parts read by ourselves and members of our partner churches. It was attended by 28 men and women from all three villages and the wider area and was very successful..

This year's theme was "I beg you, bear with one another in love" and the service was written by the Christian women of Palestine. It was beautifully written, ironically before the start of the Israel/Gaza war, and suitable time was made during the service for private prayers for the dire situation at that time.

A special song was composed for this service with the words "I urge you to be patient with the calling you receive, bearing one another with love and unity". The service shared stories which illuminated the experiences of three Palestinian Christian women from three different generations who witnessed to the power of bearing together in love.

Olive trees are a sign of everlasting and abundant life because they can live for thousands of years and a branch featured in setting the theme with citrus fruit and poppies for decoration on a central table, along with a Bible and candle. During the sharing of the peace, bookmarks themed with olive leaves were exchanged and during the service four hymns were sung ending, as is usual, with a rousing rendition of "The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended".



After this very successful service hospitality was offered in the form of tea/ coffee and tray bakes and hopefully all benefitted from the occasion, so poignant at this particular time. We continue to pray for an end to this devastating war.

Olga Harris

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



As well as being open every Saturday from 10am to 4pm, St Leonard's Church has a programme of monthly Open Saturday Afternoons when, as well as a warm welcome, tea, coffee and cakes, we shall be providing a little something extra to interest our visitors from 3pm to 5pm.

June 8th - Join us for a Strawberry & Cream tea, £5, Activity Trail and I Spy competition.

July 13th - Enjoy being entertained by the Thurcaston Handbell Ringers and visit our Bell Tower.

August 10th - A musical afternoon - listen to a live band whilst enjoying your refreshments..

September 14th - Visit us or join in with our annual 'Ride and Stride' fundraising event.

SWITHLAND CHURCH WOMEN'S GROUP

Our final meeting of the 23/24 season was at the Memorial Hall on 4th March when our speaker was Di Beste, the volunteer co-ordinator at the Shuttlewood Clarke Foundation, Ulverscroft.

She gave a very interesting talk on the life of David Clarke who founded the Foundation in memory of his mother. He was a racing driver of some repute and had a passion for Ferraris. Indeed, he sold his favourite Ferrari for £6,000,000 and was able to buy the house at Ulverscroft.

Di talked told us about the classes and activities on offer at Ulverscroft Manor as well as the tea rooms and charity shops and the extensive Model Railway David built during his lifetime. Several members of the village volunteer at the Foundation and were present at the meeting which was open to partners, the Men's Club and villagers.

Many of our members also attended the Parish Eucharist for Holy Week at St Leonard's on Monday 25th March which was conducted by Rev Steve Delaforce.

Our Autumn meetings start on Monday 7th October and any suggestions for speakers will be very welcome. Arrangements for our summer outing will follow shortly.

Sarah May 890547

Val Capewell 890551

Janet Beeby 890805



Artwork by Michal Cook

Our Sister Mother Earth

*Consider the lemon:
succulent pulp,
juicy astringency,
membranous pith
and quietly dormant seed,
cloaked in golden ellipse
woven from sun-soaked pitted rind*

*nestled in nutshell
of rough red-clay mortar
whose lemonwood pestle
may press out tart essence
and zest-fresh aroma
to blend with warm herbs
crushed to deepest intensity,
or cut through hot spices
with breath-catching tang.*

*Can this small surprising fruit,
earthed tenderly in russet-clad embrace
provide maternal nourishment
in infinite variety, vitality?
No wonder she is often called Eureka.*

Rosalind O'Melia

POETRY GROUP

'Our Sister Mother Earth' is a favourite poem of Janet Lee who submitted it for publication. If you too have a favourite poem you would like to share with us, then please forward it to the editor maryselina@hotmail.com. Janet would very much like to start a Poetry Group, meeting once a month in the upper room at St Leonard's Church. If you are interested in joining this, please contact her on 01509 890642 or janetpdlee87@gmail.com

MINSTER COMMUNITIES - AN UPDATE

Our November issue of The LINK carried an article explaining Minster Communities, defined by the diocese as "groups of churches and fresh expressions working collaboratively and sharing resources to enable effective mission". The process of forming these groups is gathering pace and a Discernment Day was held on 26th February for representatives from all churches in N.W. Leicestershire involved in this stage.

At this meeting a suggested plan was put forward, combining parishes into four groups. The groups are relatively compact geographically but each group is likely to have a different character. This plan is intended as a starting point; there is flexibility and indeed some parishes have already expressed a wish to move into a different group.

Swithland is situated close to the borders of two groups, one running up the A6 corridor and the other running through Quorn to the Wolds villages. The first is a group of traditional, evangelical churches, and the second includes churches of a more theologically liberal nature. The Parochial Church Council have been examining which group might be the better fit for our church, given our ethos and tradition, and have provisionally chosen the second group. The decision is not binding at this stage, and as more information becomes available on how each group is developing this choice can be refined.

It is clearly very important that all views are taken into consideration, and there will be an opportunity for parishioners and church members to ask questions and give their opinions at our Annual Meeting after the morning service on 7th April. We would also urge you to pray for those with the responsibility of making these difficult decisions, and most importantly that we will emerge from the process with our faith and commitment strengthened by learning from and working together with our brothers and sisters from other communities.

Penny Craven, PCC Secretary.



CANON ANNE HORTON A BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

We were very pleased to welcome Canon Anne Horton to our recent Palm Sunday service to celebrate her 80th birthday on 28th March and to be reminded about her background and the twenty years she spent with us.

Anne first came to Leicester from her home town of Maidstone in Kent to study at Leicester University and subsequently she taught maths firstly at Spencefield Secondary Modern School

and then at Collegiate Girls Grammar School. Later in her career she studied for three years at Lincoln Theological College before becoming a deacon in the Church of England within the Leicester Diocese.

In 1993 the Church of England agreed to the ordination of women in the priesthood and in May 1994 Anne became one of eighteen deacons to be ordained in Leicester Cathedral by Bishop Tom Butler. Anne later said that on hearing the news that women were to be ordained, she was so overjoyed she went dancing down to Birstall Church to give thanks to God.

Anne was serving as Diocesan Director of Training when, a week after she was ordained priest on May 14th, she was licensed as priest-in-charge of Swithland and became the first woman priest to be licensed as an incumbent status post in the Leicester Diocese. As she observed in her first official letter in The LINK, she and the parish of Swithland were 'making history together'! On the morning of that memorable day a celebratory peal of bells was rung by leading ringers in the diocese and in the evening, St Leonard's ringers rang to herald her 6pm licensing service. Anne was also made a Canon of Leicester Cathedral in 1994. Following the sale of the old 1898 Rectory and the building of another rectory in its grounds, Anne then spent the next twenty years in her much loved new home.

There were some initial misgivings in the congregation about Anne's appointment, especially within the Men's Club who were reluctant to elect her as their president - a position that had always been held by the Rector. However, after realising that they were behaving nonsensically, she was duly elected and then

enjoyed many social occasions with them, especially their annual Christmas Dinner.

During her early years at St Leonard's Anne continued in her diocesan post, but then in 1998 St Leonard's Parochial Church Council was asked to consider forming a benefice with Woodhouse Eaves and Woodhouse. Being mindful of the continuing cutbacks in stipendiary posts (nothing changes!) the PCC decided to go ahead with the proposal and in 1999 the new benefice was formed and on 9th February 2000 Anne was subsequently inducted as the first freehold Rector of the United Benefice.

At the time of these proposals Anne was hoping for the support of Bob Osborne in her new role as he had been PCC secretary since 1984, and looked after much of the church administration. However he tragically died suddenly in May 1999. Bob had a profound understanding of, and interest in, the local community both past and present. He had begun to create the book which Anne would later go on to complete - 'Swithland Church and Estate' of which many of us have a treasured copy.

In the early days of the Historic Churches Ride and Stride event, Anne would set off on her bike with nine or ten younger members of the congregation to raise funds for this charity. Her enthusiasm and encouragement were very infectious and we were all easily persuaded to attempt things outside of our comfort zones. Over the years she had loyal supporters and volunteers, many of whom organised the fund raising necessary for the extension to the church which was completed in 2000 and officially opened by Bishop Tim Stevens. In particular she was a great encourager of young people some of whom became servers or even learned to play the organ and she was instrumental in the training of Rev Steve Delaforce and the encouragement of Dawn Daly in her vocation.

Once the benefice was formed Anne took at least three services every Sunday between the churches of Swithland, Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves, and, once a month, four services when there was an evensong. Her sermons were always thought provoking and her commitment and enjoyment of her ministry was very evident and greatly appreciated by us all. During her years as Rector, Anne was a much loved and active member of the Swithland community and we all wish her well in her future years.

Val Capewell & Hazel Byford