



MAY 2024

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

Sunday 5th

8am Holy Communion (BCP) Revd Alison Prince
9.30am Holy Communion (CW) Revd Alison Prince
3pm **Bluebell Service in Swithland Woods**
(see page 3 for further details)

Thursday 9th

ASCENSION DAY

2pm Holy Communion Revd Colin Resch

Sunday 12th

9.30am Family Worship Helen Hodson
Theme: House Builders

Sunday 19th

PENTECOST

8am Holy Communion (BCP) Revd Colin Resch
NO 9.30am SERVICE AT ST LEONARD'S
11am Holy Communion (CW) Revd Colin Resch
A Churches Together Service to be held at
Christchurch Mountsorrel

Sunday 26th

9.30am Morning Prayer Olga Harris/Gary Lee

Revd. Colin Resch
Priest in charge of the Mountsorrel Benefice
with St Leonard's Swithland
4 Rothley Road, Mountsorrel, Loughborough, LE12 7J
Tel/Fax 0116 429 9946 revcolinresch@mountsorrelchurch.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 May 2024*



Unlock the Secrets of St Leonard's Church

Visit us on Saturday 8th June - 3pm to 5pm

Enjoy a 'Strawberries & Cream' tea

and take part in our new FAMILY ACTIVITY TRAIL

Further details inside



The Power of Prayer

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.

When we pray to God the Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, things happen. Our prayers are answered, the sick are made well, uncertain situations become clear, anxiety turns to peace.

Prayer is more than just presenting God with a copy of our 'wish list'. Prayer is a conversation that builds a relationship. The more we practice prayer, the more we recognise the voice of God in our lives. Sometimes God's voice comes as a random thought that pops up from nowhere; sometimes his voice is a stirring of our conscience; at other times his voice comes as an overwhelming sense of peace; sometimes God's voice is as audible as yours or mine. As with any conversation, the more we converse, the more we recognise our own pattern of thoughts, and we learn to recognise the voice of the other party. My wife doesn't need to be told it's me on the phone, she simply recognises my voice; and so it is with God.

Once again, from Ascension Day (9th May) to Pentecost Sunday (19th May), the Church of England is encouraging us to participate in a special time of prayer - Thy Kingdom Come. Each day we are encouraged to set aside additional time to pray. Maybe it will be praying for people you know and love to become Christians; maybe you will concentrate on praying for those you know who are sick or going through a particularly tough time at present; or maybe it will be praying about a particular situation in the world or in your own life that you are struggling with.

To help, you can download the *Daily Prayer for Thy Kingdom Come* app for your Android or iPhone to join in with daily morning, evening and night prayer. Or get your smart speaker (from 9th May) to 'ask the Church of England for today's Thy Kingdom Come' to hear a short service of Prayer During the Day (before 7pm) and Night Prayer (after 7pm) throughout the 11 days.

Whatever, however you pray, enjoy.

With love and blessings, Colin Resch.

***** SAVE THIS DATE *****

Tuesday 2nd July

when the Swithland Women's Group are planning an evening visit to Barkby Hall Gardens followed by a restaurant meal.

Details are to follow.



St Leonard's is very lucky in having a good number of volunteers to arrange flowers on a weekly basis.

If you would like to sponsor our flowers or the floodlighting of the church in memory of a loved one, or to celebrate any occasion that is special to you and members of your family, please contact Sally Allen for further details - 0116 2375704

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 are held each Friday morning in

Church in termtime.



EVERYONE WELCOME!



"FIFTEEN MINUTES READINGS"

If you are using our daily "Fifteen Minutes Readings" and would like to receive these for the month of May, please email the Editor - maryselina@hotmail.co.uk

ST LEONARD'S PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
OFFICERS AND MEMBERS - 2024/25

Following the Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting on 7th April, the Council now consists of the following members :

Rev Colin Resch - Chairman

Martin Greenwood -Vice Chairman & Health & Safety Officer

Sally Allen - Churchwarden

Christine Watts - Churchwarden & Adult Safeguarding Officer

Penny Craven - Secretary

Valerie Capewell -Treasurer

Alison Wright - Electoral Roll & Children's Safeguarding Officer

Virginia Aspinall

Hazel Byford

Derek Cranage

Jayne Cranage

Olga Harris

Jennifer de Hever

Gary Lee

From the Treasurer's Report at the meeting it was very interesting to note how much St Leonard's had raised in 2023 and been able to donate to many and varied charities and organisations.

Our Mission Giving totalled £675 and included regular donations which we make to the Church Mission Society fund and the Train a Priest initiative. In addition, donations were made to The Friends of Launde Abbey, Friends of the Cathedral, Christians in the Forest and the British Legion Poppy Appeal.

During the year our outreach events raised money for the Air Ambulance, MacMillan Cancer Support, The Children's Society, Cancer Research and the Leicestershire Historic Churches Trust, enabling us to give away an extremely gratifying total amount of £1,590. Well done to all those involved.

Mary Toone - Chairman of St Leonard's Outreach Team



ST LEONARD'S CHURCH
BLUEBELL SERVICE

is at 3pm

on SUNDAY 5th MAY

in Swithland Woods by the Great Pit
(What3words - bolts.hedge.tips)

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,
Main Street, Swithland, 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.

Donations can be made via our website
stleonardsswithland.org/donate
or by using this QR code.



ST LEONARD'S CHURCH WILL BE OPEN
DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS
FOR VISITORS FROM 3pm TO 5pm ON

SATURDAY 8th JUNE



Celebrate the Summer - join us for a 'Strawberries and Cream' tea, £5, and the launch of our Activity Trail when the young and not so young are invited to 'Unlock the Secrets of St Leonard's Church and Discover some of its Mysteries'.

SATURDAY 13th JULY



Join us for tea and cakes and be entertained by the Thurcaston Handbell Ringers in aid of LOROS. 'Have a go' yourself and take the opportunity to visit our Bell Tower.

SATURDAY 10th AUGUST



Join us for tea and cakes and listen to the music of 'Jazz Manouche', a gypsy jazz band who will be playing for your enjoyment during the afternoon.

SATURDAY 7th SEPTEMBER



Visit the Annual Swithland Flower & Vegetable Show and then call in on us for a refreshing cup of tea and cake.

Make a note of these dates in your diary.
Our Activity Trail leaflet and video presentation about the church will be available on each occasion and we shall look forward to making you welcome.



ST LEONARD'S CHURCH
ASCENSION DAY SERVICE
THURSDAY MAY 9th at 2pm



Ascension Day marks the end of the Easter Season.

It is when Jesus took his disciples to the Mount of Olives where they watched him ascend into heaven.

Why not join us this year to celebrate this most important day in the Christian calendar.

We shall also be welcoming some pupils from St Leonard's CofE Primary School to take part in the service with us.

D DAY ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The Memorial Hall Management Committee is planning to carry out some much needed repairs to the Memorial Hall. As part of the fund raising effort, we are holding an evening party on **Saturday June 8th** which will take the form of a D Day anniversary celebration.

Ron and his musicians will perform live music from the era. There will be a two course supper - tickets are £25 each - and all proceeds will go towards the refurbishment of the Hall.

Swithland has a rich history of celebrations of this type. If you would like to come in uniform or costume of the time, that will add to the fun.

If you would like tickets please contact Sarah May 01509 890547 or sarah.may1@btinternet.com

Come along, have some fun, and help to preserve the Memorial Hall.
Sarah May

DIARY OF A CHURCH MOUSE



Here among long-discarded cassocks,
Damp stools, and half-split open
hassocks,
Here where the Vicar never looks
I nibble through old service books.
Lean and alone I spend my days
Behind this Church of England baize.
I share my dark forgotten room
With two oil-lamps and half a broom.
The cleaner never bothers me,
So here I eat my frugal tea.
My bread is sawdust mixed with straw;
My jam is polish for the floor.
Christmas and Easter may be feasts
For congregations and for priests,
And so may Whitsun. All the same,
They do not fill my meagre frame.
For me the only feast at all
Is Autumn's Harvest Festival,
When I can satisfy my want
With ears of corn around the font.
I climb the eagle's brazen head
To burrow through a loaf of bread.
I scramble up the pulpit stair
And gnaw the marrows hanging there.
It is enjoyable to taste
These items ere they go to waste,
But how annoying when one finds
That other mice with pagan minds
Come into church my food to share
Who have no proper business there.
Two field mice who have no desire
To be baptised, invade the choir.
A large and most unfriendly rat
Comes in to see what we are at.
He says he thinks there is no God
And yet he comes ... it's rather odd.

JOHN BETJEMAN



This year he stole a sheaf of wheat
It screened our special preacher's seat,
And prosperous mice from fields away
Come in to hear the organ play,
And under cover of its notes
Ate through the altar's sheaf of oats.
A low church mouse who thinks that I
Am too papistical, and High,
Yet somehow doesn't think it wrong
To munch through Harvest Evensong,
While I who starve the whole year
through,
Must share my food with rodents who
Except at this time of the year
Not once inside the church appear.
Within the human world I know
Such goings-on could not be so,
For human beings only do
What their religion tells them to.
They read the Bible every day
And always, night and morning, pray,
And just like me the good church mouse
Worship each week in God's own house,
But all the same it's strange to me
How very full the church can be
With people I don't see at all
Except at Harvest Festival.

If you have a favourite poem that you would like to share in The LINK, please forward it to the Editor.

Our Poetry Group will meet once a month in the Upper Room in church. If you would like to join us, please contact Janet Lee - 01509 890642 or janetpdlee87@gmail.com

TEDDY BEARS PICNIC

Over the last few weeks our dear friend, Pat Copson, has been busy knitting for a Teddy Bears Picnic when toddlers from a local nursery will be visiting Rose Cottage.



The children have visited before and everyone has thoroughly enjoyed these occasions. Pat has knitted a total of 15 teddies so that each child will get one to take home. Quite an achievement for someone who is 99 years young!

Jayne & Derek Cranage



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.

Remaining course dates and venues are as follows:

- 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.



Rev Steve Delaforce is a familiar face at St Leonard's where we are very lucky to have him taking many of our services. Here he tells us of his background and how he came to be so much a part of our worship and fellowship. Editor

STEVE DELAFORCE

Born in London in 1952, I was not brought up in a Christian household although Christian values were much in evidence. My father was an artisan and descended from the Huguenots. After school I became an indentured technician apprentice and in my early 20's I married and had two lovely children. Aged 24 I followed my peer group and took a degree at my local polytechnic, much to the dismay of my father who was 'old school' with working class roots. My marriage did not last beyond graduation. As a mechanical engineer I began a long and fruitful career within the aerospace, nuclear, energy and gas industries and moved around the country. In the 90's my job took me to Loughborough, and I lived in Derbyshire and spent 6 months working in Newcastle. By then I had a pony tail and a goatee beard and was playing bass in folk/rock bands.

During my engineering studies I became interested in world religions and would get books from the library. As a result of this, in the late 80's I was planning on becoming a Buddhist. However, God has a sense of humour as, instead, I was directed to a Christian Seminary in London. With hindsight, taking a diploma in Religious Studies through London University with zero biblical background is, in my opinion, the wrong way to go about these things. However, I was baptized and confirmed and right from the get go, shock horror, could see myself in priestly robes, but kept these thoughts under wraps.

A visit to Johannesburg in 1996 led to a chance meeting with Muriel and in a short time we realised that our relationship was going somewhere; we married in Cape Town the following year. We set up home in Loughborough in 1998 and I took up part time graduate studies in Theology at Nottingham. I had a very supportive vicar in Loughborough which led to conversations about ministry and as a result, I was selected for ordination training. A hiatus in the middle of ordination training was overcome with what I can only describe as a mystical experience - corroborated by a fellow student who recounted to me a verbal version of what I had seen. I saw a vision of a tiny spot of white light appear in front of me whilst in a makeshift chapel. It grew into a vertical bright shining being. No words were uttered, but the being beckoned me to

come and follow by a head gesture. The vision gradually faded. I went to get up thinking I was dreaming and this was all bonkers but my fellow student grabbed me by the arm and pulled me back into my seat saying "Steve I don't do things like this but I've just been told by Jesus to tell you to follow and go with him." As I write this even now, the hairs on my neck are standing up and my eyes are welling with emotion.

So I followed Jesus' call. I was ordained in 2007 and became self-supporting curate in Swithland, Woodhouse Eaves and Woodhouse in the care of Anne Horton. In 2010 I went to Christ the King, Beaumont Leys and in 2015 became the vicar there and at St Luke's, Stocking Farm. Incidentally Anne had been a deacon at Christ the King before she went to Swithland, et al, as Rector. Funny how paths are intertwined.

I retired my post as vicar in 2020 just as covid began and in November that year I received permission to officiate in the Diocese of Leicester and headed off to help a colleague in an inner-city church. From then onwards, I began to be asked to take various services which included baptisms and funerals in rural churches that were in vacancy. I didn't look for them but they just found me.

Along the way I was asked by Darren, your former curate, to cover an Easter service at St Leonard's. The service didn't happen because of covid closures but I was asked to cover a service when things began to open up and from my diary I think took my first service at St Leonard's in the middle of 2021. This then expanded to Mountsorrel and there came a point when there were seven churches on my rota and I realised something had to give.

Last October I consolidated my ministry focus on Swithland, Mountsorrel and Quorn. I have to say that ministry in retirement has been delightful since I am freed up from church administration and far too many meetings and can offer to ministry whatever gifts I have been blessed with. I have never thought of ministry as a job as such, and find myself being drawn to people and wanting to walk alongside them during their own personal journeys and struggles in life. Getting to know and understand people is all part and parcel of attempting to understand their spiritual needs and hopes. At the end of the day it's about our relationship with God our creator through Jesus our Lord and Redeemer and our relationships with the neighbour and the stranger. It's about our willingness to follow God's call on our lives rather than our own agendas.

I personally hope that we shall be able to continue to travel together for a good long while yet.