



St Michael's Messenger

August 2020

Life after Lockdown !

Yes we are open again !

After weeks of Lockdown , staying home , staying safe , being alert, being careful to wash hands frequently and with clapping the NHS being the highlight of the week, at last we are able to worship together once more.



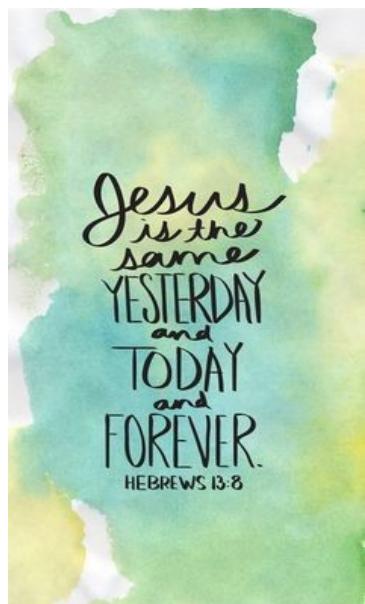
The Lockdown provided many opportunities for God's word to be broadcast near and far, and no doubt many people found a new inspiration in the services and prayers to be found on line , and in the media in so many ways. It all helped to keep our faith, our worship and prayers relevant as the sad stories were told week by week. Would we ever have imagined

our world undergoing such a huge pandemic which knocked the world and its trade off its feet and killed many millions of people ? Slowly, rather like birds being released from a cage, we are emerging back into our world. Not the world we knew , but a different and strange world with masks and gloves being the norm and keeping our distance from one another and those we love most.

Will things ever get back to the normal we knew ?

But one thing we do know . God in Jesus is the same Yesterday Today and Forever. He is there beside us , as we tentatively take steps back out into the world. He is there with the scientists who strive to find a vaccine and more medication to overcome Covid 19. And for us at St. Michaels , in the midst of it all we come out of Lockdown with the wonderful news that a new priest has been appointed to take us forward into this strange new world !

In among all this there are many questions and probably a great lack of answers. But with God there beside us let us keep faith and work together to welcome Fr.Alex to St. Michaels and St. Cyprian, praying always that more people will find God there beside them in the coming months whatever happens in the world around us. May those people who have found God on line over these months find the way to our churches and God's blessing awaiting them there.



May God Bless us All,

Faith Smith. (Reader)

Congratulations and our happy birthday wishes go to those with birthdays in August :

Pauline Rees, Andrew McLintock, Isobel Gonzolez, Bob Dolphin.

Please let me know if there are any I haven't included or for any news items etc. to Faith Smith email : faithheron@yahoo.co.uk.



Services on Sundays are booked until the end of September.

Said Eucharist 10am each week.

Before then we should have a date for Fr. Alex's Licensing.

Presiding and Preaching are :

Sunday August	16th	Rev. Professor Hugh Houghton
	23rd	Venerable Paul Taylor
	30th	Rev. Canon Brian Hall
Sunday September	6th	Venerable Paul Taylor
	13th	Rev. Professor Hugh Houghton
	20th	Rev. Nicholas Ball
	27th	Venerable Paul Taylor.

Church is open each Tuesday for

Private Prayer from 10-11am.



St Michael's web site: www.smaaa.church





ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW INCUMBENT FOR HAY MILLS & SOUTH YARDLEY

The Bishop of Birmingham is delighted to announce that, Fr Alexander French has been appointed as the Priest in Charge for St Michael's South Yardley and St Cyprian's Hay Mills. Fr Alex is currently the curate in the parish of Oldswinford in the diocese of Worcester. Previously Alex has a long experience of working in education as a teacher and Deputy head teacher as well as in Business education and originally with the Central Electricity Generating Board. As someone with wider experience Alex is committed to the church as an incarnational presence to enable the flourishing of life.

Bishop David says,

'I am delighted that Fr Alex is coming to join Church of England Birmingham. Working across these two parishes is a role full of opportunity both in church and society. We are excited to see this new chapter in helping our catholic tradition to flourish and the opportunities of a new industrial heritage park at Hay Mills. We look forward to seeing God raising up new people and provision in both places and hold Alex in our prayers as we seek the growth of God's kingdom.'

Alex says, *'God works in wonderful and unexpected ways and I am thrilled by how God's plans are working themselves out as I embrace and live out my journey of faith. There are many wonderful opportunities present within the parishes of Hay Mills and South Yardley to ensure that we proclaim in deed and word, that in Christ God has not given up on God's world, but continues to love & sustain it. I can't wait to start sharing in the life of St Cyprian's and*

St Michael's, helping to serve and build the communities that these churches serve through the presence of revolutionary love'

Alex, along with his son George and resident dogs, Marla and Moses, are looking forward to moving to Birmingham.

Arrangements for Alex's institution are in discussion and we hope a date in early September will be announced soon. Please join Bishop David in praying for Alex in this transition. Also remember Oldswinford as they bid farewell to their curate as well as Hay Mills & South Yardley as they prepare to welcome their new priest.

FURTHER INFORMATION: The Archdeacon of Aston, The Venerable Simon Heathfield, c/o Jenny Harris, jennyh@cofebirmingham.com.

A sad farewell to Sheila Perry.

Sheila was born in Dudley on 26th January 1932, although she actually grew up in Redditch. Sheila's parents bought a newsagents shop in Erdington in 1946 around the time when Sheila met her future husband-to-be John. Sheila helped her Father in the shop before her marriage .

Sheila and John were married on 10th May 1952, and had a long and happy marriage of 67 years. They had two sons , Stephen and Andrew. Sadly John died just six weeks before Sheila, so they were together for most of their lives.



Sheila at Walsingham with Hilda Wood and Pauline Godfree

Sheila was a member of St. Michaels church for over 40 years. She sang in the choir, sang the psalm during the morning service at one stage, and singing was a very big part of her life. She sang in many productions at St. Michaels and in the Yardley area . During her early years in Erdington Sheila had been a member of the Royal Sutton Coldfield Opera Society with her mother and sister.

Sheila also helped with the flower arranging at Christmas and Easter, baked cakes for the Christmas Fairs, knitted baby clothes for the Premature Baby Unit, and helped out in many other areas.

A big part of Sheila's life was photography. She became the photographer for St. Michael's and took endless photos of the Clergy , Readers, Servers and congregation on special occasions. It is hard to find a photo with Sheila on as she always took them ! There are many, many photos in the Archives at church. Sheila also took many photos around the changing scenes of Birmingham and other places, and donated all her photos to Birmingham City council in 2014.

A big event for Sheila was the visit to Rome led by Fr. Clifton Graham . Sheila loved the visit to the Vatican and the many churches in Rome. She also went on Pilgrimage to Walsingham many times .

Sheila had many interests, gardening, fishing and was devoted to her granddaughter Roxanne, who often came to St. Michael's with Sheila when she was young. Sheila died on 19th June 2020 just six weeks after John .Sheila and John were very much a couple, and will be sadly missed by the family and all who knew her.

Taken from a write up by Andrew Perry. FS.

And a sad farewell to Joan Tirebuck.

Joan was born on 28th August 1931, and was the eldest of three children. She attended Cockshut Hill School where she met her future husband John.

They met at a school dance at the ages of 14 and 15 and enjoyed many social events together, especially cycling. They had a tandem, and went to many places around the West Midlands. Joan's first job was as a registrar at Selly Oak Hospital, then later she became a dental receptionist.

John and Joan were married on 3rd April 1954, and bought a house on the Coventry Road, where they remained for the rest of their married lives. The house was in a poor state, but with much hard work and determination they turned 1894 into a home they could be proud of. John was a cabinet maker and applied his skills to every element of the house , and Joan complimented this by being extremely house proud , as well as coping with a full time job.

Four years after their wedding their daughter Heather was born, their only child. Joan was a devoted wife and mother. A few years later after John was involved in a cycling accident and was a long time in hospital recovering Joan bought a toy poodle puppy to help provide some comfort.to Heather who missed her Father, and soon the whole family became very much attached to Peppy. Joan had many hobbies and interests. She was 'Brown Owl ' to a local Brownie Pack , organising holidays at the 'Brownie House '.Joan and John rented an allotment, growing fruit and vegetables, and she became a First Aid representative for the St. John Ambulance within British Gas West Midlands where Joan worked once Heather was eleven.

Throughout their 59 years of married life John and Joan were members of St. Michael's Parish Church. Joan loved to arrange flowers, make cakes for the Fairs, and loved to go on Pilgrimage to Walsingham. John also provided many of his wooden bowls and other items carved by himself with great skill, as well as a new altar and holy water stand. They joined in with many other activities. Joan was devoted to her two Grandsons, and a sausage sandwich was always available, as well as other edible delights. She had a humorous gentle caring sense of humour and presented as a tower of strength with her 'spit, polish and no nonsense' attitude and a knowing wink ! Joan became a Great Grandmother to Madison in 2015, 'GG 'as she was affectionately known.

Sadly in these later years Joan suffered vascular dementia and Alzheimer's disease, and had to leave her family home to live in a nursing home. Joan died on 9th March 2020 .John had passed away in April 2015. Joan will be very sadly missed by her family and all who knew her.

Taken from a eulogy by Heather Costello. FS.



At Last we have a new priest !

A Glimpse behind the Scenes !

After what seems a very long time since Fr. Roy moved to Scotland, at last we have a new priest but I thought you might like to know a bit about what went on behind the scenes with the search for a new priest during the almost four year vacancy.



Once Fr. Roy left, the PCC were able to choose Parish reps and work on the Parish Profile - a statement of who we are, what we do, how we do it and what we'd like to see in a new incumbent. Over time this was combined with a similar document from St. Cyprian and an advert was placed in the Church Times.

After a while in 2019 a candidate emerged but, despite being talented, these skills were not seen to be the ones needed at St. Michaels.

There followed some backtracking and for the rest of that year we went down the route of discussing and voting about seeking Alternative Episcopal Oversight, whereby male priests were to be preferred. This process was both emotional and divisive, and led to some very testing times. However once this had been set aside we were able to move on and revise the Profile to reflect the latest situation.

Early in 2020 a new advert was produced by the Diocese and we amended it significantly to more accurately reflect the needs of St. Michaels and St. Cyprian.

Then we waited.....

In mid March 2020 news came that a candidate had applied and we needed to read the application very carefully. Unfortunately at that time I was on a ship heading off to Norway but Faith managed to extract it and send the PDF file which I received by literally leaning off the back end of the ship, pointing my phone at Southampton as we sailed off down the Solent !

The following week in conjunction with our colleagues at St. Cyprian we were able to agree that the candidate should be shortlisted and interviewed.

Then C-19 struck!

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The normal procedure would be to invite all candidates to an interview in one of the churches followed by a social evening where members of the congregations and local VIPs such as MPs and Councillors would be invited to greet and meet them. With Covid 19 lockdown this was impossible but, after several weeks, the Diocese had plan B ready and in use for other vacancies, which was to interview online using Zoom.

Although there were some worries about this in the end it was arranged and in July we logged on for an afternoon of training using this method. Sadly one of St. Cyprian's rep's broadband suffered from technical issues and they could join by sound only but after a couple of hours, all worked quite well.

Fr.Alex then made a socially distanced flying visit to see both churches and our Vicarage and the following day the proper interview was started. Again, it took several hours and unfortunately the issues with the computer system of one of the reps meant participation in sound only again but it all worked well, involving not only the reps but Archdeacon Fr.Simon and Area Dean Fr.Andrew. The Diocese then had a lot of work to do with background checks and other legalities which took quite some time and it was only at 7.20am last Sunday morning that we were given the OK to make the official announcement!



The above paragraphs are just a brief summary of what went on over the past three and a half years or so and, as you can imagine, there was a lot more involved – some very worrying and some very humorous but, in the end, I believe we have been blessed with a Priest with all the right skills so it's now up to us all to join in, work hard, and see how Fr.Alex can steer us into the future.

Paul

(Note ! It all sounds so easy when you take out the anxiety, frustration, tension and waiting.....!!!!!! But Alleluia, we are happy now ! FS.)

Statue of St. Gregory.

How many of us remember Margaret Brinkworth I wonder ? Below is the reproduction of an article she wrote for the Pews New waaaaay back in the 1990's. Another bit of information for those interested in the History of St. Michael's and it's Art work. Extract supplied by Paul Stevens.

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You've all seen our new statue and several of you have asked for more information. We're pleased to now tell you a little more about the background of:

THE STATUE OF ST.GREGORY

The beautiful carved statue of St.Gregory has been very generously given to St.Michael's Church as a leaving present from Fr.Keith and Carol.

Originally it was given to St.Gregory's Church, Small Heath, in memory of my husband, Frank. who had previously been a worshipper here at St.Michael's for many years.

The statue was carved by Anton Wagner, a Woodcarver now living in Walsingham, Norfolk, who learned his craft at Oberammergau, the village in Southern Germany made famous by the Passion Play performed there every ten years. The parts picked out in gold leaf were skilfully done by the late Enid Chadwick, an artist also living in Walsingham at that time.

As St.Gregory's Church is now closed, and a number of people past and present at St.Michael's have had connections there, I think it very fitting that the statue should come here and I shall be eternally grateful to Fr.Keith and carol for obtaining it for us.

Margaret Brinkworth.