

September 2026

£1.50

THE PARISH OF
STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

HOLY TRINITY • ALL SAINTS' LUDDINGTON • ST. HELEN'S CLIFFORD CHAMBERS

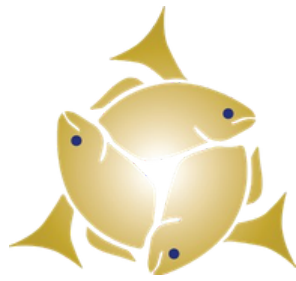


TRINITY TIMES



Lives changed through God's love

 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



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We love to receive articles and photographs for the magazine which can be sent to the e-mail address below. However, we reserve the right to edit anything that is sent to us and the editor's decision is final.

Please note that views expressed in *Trinity Times* are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Parochial Church Council.

The next magazine will be the **October** edition

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If any item is left until the very last minute, or received after the copy date, there is no guarantee that it will be included in the magazine.

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#HolyTrinity on social media



Front Cover: Revd Emma's emotion-filled final blessing at the end of her last Eucharist at Holy Trinity on July 12th, *photo: George Reah*

Back Cover: top: congregation at Holy Trinity for the joint service with the Methodist church in July, *photo, George Reah*; bottom: Lizzie and Matilda after their admission to Communion before Confirmation with Phil and Patrick, *photo, James Willetts*.

Holy Trinity Team



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Phil Harper
*Children and Families
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SIMPLY TO BE



I wonder if it's possible to retreat from a retreat? I nearly discovered the answer to that question recently. As part of being a Licensed Lay Minister, and even in my contract as Children and Families Minister, I'm supposed to take an annual retreat. Time out of the parish for reflection, to reconnect with God, perhaps some rest and rejuvenation - generally anything beginning with "re".

July not only marked my tenth anniversary of beginning to work at Holy Trinity, it also marked my tenth year of not having been on retreat; technically that's a longer record as it isn't something I've really taken before in my nineteen and a half years as a Children and Families Minister.



Launde Abbey in Leicestershire, originally a 12th Century Augustinian Priory, then a Tudor Manor House, now a Christian place of retreat for people from all walks of life.

This year I took the plunge and booked for a Beginners Retreat at Launde Abbey. I thought this would be the perfect way into the life of retreats.

It was a great experience, but there were reasons I considered retreating and escaping from my retreat. I was already anxious because I'm not great with quiet and too long being introspective, but I needn't have worried about that.

One of the issues I had was that this became a training course on what you may do on retreat. There was a group of ten of us journeying through this space together, sharing meals, the times of learning, worship and other times together.

Although it was wonderful to be with such a varied interesting group of people, it did feel slightly like a busman's holiday. Between 8.00am Eucharist, and people sharing their life stories into the late night I came back from my retreat tired, my head full of busyness and not much of what I was expecting to feel like after my retreat.

We're coming to the end of the holiday season and I suppose there are people who may be feeling the same. We see the annual holiday as a time to rest, reconnect and be rejuvenated, but often we come back exhausted, possibly slightly frayed from spending so much time together, and never seeming to experience the Thomas Cook dream of laughing together running in the sand.

But after a few days when you reflect and the tiredness reduces we usually begin to see the joys of our holiday, the funny moments, or awkward encounters. Perhaps it could be classed as the rose-tinted glasses effect. Or perhaps it's the reality effect. Immediately on our return from holiday we're still comparing our breaks to the dream we had in our head, but with a little time we can think of our time away not as what we expected it to be, but simply for whatever it was.



...continued

I think this can be an insight into our journey of faith: the expectations of what a journey with God may be like can never match the reality we're living in God's space, God's time. This can lead to times of disappointment, feelings of being disconnected. But when we stop comparing our experiences to our expectations, and instead reflect back on what was, then we may realise how much God was a part of what we experienced.

At the beginning of the retreat, one of the leaders shared this quote with us from Evelyn Underhill: "We mostly spend our lives conjugating three verbs: to Want, to Have and to Do... we are kept in perpetual unrest, forgetting that none of these verbs have any ultimate significance, except so far as they are transcended by and included in the fundamental verb, to Be, and that Being, not wanting, having and doing, is the essence of the spiritual life."

Perhaps if I'd had spent more time during my retreat simply being, not holding it to my image, expectations, or desires of what it would be, I would not have been focussing on escaping from my retreat.

The best times of my retreat were when I was in the moment, exploring and being open to whatever happened. Walking an outdoor labyrinth barefooted (*right*), sitting in a small chapel in what used to be an animal shed, being inspired by a stained-glass window inside it.



"To be" is such a simple message, but one we often forget. How much pleasure would we get from life to make the most of what is, to be present in the moment.

The next time I go on retreat, I know I simply need to be - and possibly go on one with fewer people around.

Phil

Phil Harper
Children and Families Minister

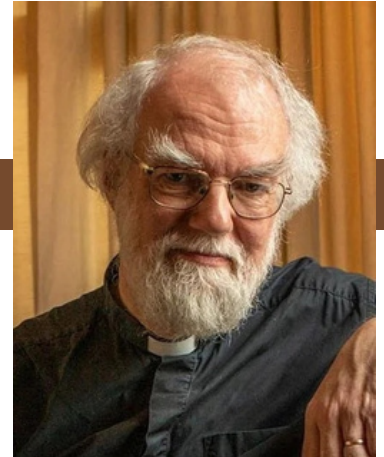
The "Welcoming Christ" statue at Launde Abbey represents the risen Christ appearing to the Apostles.

WORSHIP NOTES - SEPTEMBER

A new Icon for Holy Trinity

A new icon of 'Christ Pantocrator' has been specially commissioned for the Becket Chapel and this will be blessed by Archbishop Rowan Williams at a service in the Guild Chapel on **September 3rd**. See page 8 for more details, including a presentation earlier in the day at the Town Hall of the new icon by local iconographer Susan Mobberley. Other icons are also being blessed for St Gregory's Roman Catholic Church, so this will be a wonderfully ecumenical occasion!

Our icon will be displayed for the first year by the High Altar in Holy Trinity, in order to protect it whilst it fully dries. A full-sized copy is being produced and this will be placed in the Becket chapel during a special 10.00am Parish Eucharist on **September 13th**.



6th September Holy Trinity

10.00am Parish Eucharist with the Blessing of Bags

As the new school term begins, we invite those at school to bring their book bag or rucksack to be blessed. Any adults who have a bag or case of some kind associated with their work are also invited to bring it in so that we can ask for God's blessing for you in your work.

Revd Patrick

Social Events Autumn 2026

**Walk in
Luddington
Sept 12th**



**Christmas
Pudding Making
Nov 21st**



**Harvest
Moveable Feast
Oct 10th**



**Christmas
Wreath Making
Nov 28th**



**SOCIAL
EVENTS**

For more information
please contact Chris
on 01789 204273

**THE PARISH OF
STRATFORD-UPON-AVON**
HOLY TRINITY • ALL SAINTS' LUDDINGTON • ST. HELEN'S CLIFFORD CHAMBERS



SUNDAY SERVICES FOR SEPTEMBER

Holy Trinity

Sunday 6th September — The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity

9.00am Bubble Church, Parish Centre
10.00am Parish Eucharist - Blessing of School Bags
5.00pm Holy Communion (traditional)

Sunday 13th September — The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

8.00am Holy Communion
10.00am Parish Eucharist - installation of new icon in Becket Chapel
5.00pm Choral Evensong

Sunday 20th September — The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

9.00am Bubble Church, Parish Centre
10.00am Parish Eucharist - The Unexpected Kingdom, Part 1

Sunday 27th September — The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

10.00am Parish Eucharist - The Unexpected Kingdom, Part 2
5.00pm Choral Evensong with healing ministry



All Saints' Luddington

All Sundays

9.30am Holy Communion



St Helen's Clifford Chambers

Sunday 6th September

9.30am Morning Praise with
Phoenix Band

Sunday 20th September

9.30am Holy Communion



PCC MEETING NOTES

On a lovely evening on the 14th July the PCC (Parochial Church Council) assembled in All Saints' Church Luddington.

Those present were Revd Patrick Taylor, Revd Matt Ford, Andrew Boyes-Varley, Mike Warrillow, Paul Lageu, Helen Warrillow, Diane Armstrong, Malcolm Robinson, Heather Fletcher, Jane Armitage, Teresa Kristunas, Jane Beeley, Jeremy Harrold, Liz Roper-Kemp, George Reah, Charlotte Didora, Dale Edgington, John Riley, Anthony Woollard and Colin Millington.



Revd Patrick welcomed us all and then Jane Beeley opened the meeting with a prayer. The PCC was informed that Danni Benge had resigned for personal reasons and that she had been thanked for her service. Invitations for nominations are invited for September PCC meeting.

Teresa Kristunas shared a fascinating history of the lovely All Saints' Church and some of the challenges relating to this parish church set on the edge of the river and constrained for space. It is a delightfully light building especially on a summer's evening with the sun streaming through the windows casting many colours from the stained-glass windows, and within an idyllic rural setting.

The PCC had its annual away day a few weeks ago and we needed to select and prioritise the key projects for the next five years. Andrew Boyes-Varley led the session and had done a marvellous job to summarise the ideas created. Each PCC member then selected their top three projects, thus aligning people to projects and outcomes. As the projects become more clearly defined, we will bring these out to the full Parish community.

Our Director of Music Colin Millington brought forward a proposal for Trinity Scholars, an outreach and choral training programme which will enable children from across the parish to learn to sing and, we hope, to join the choir in a year or two. Funding has been secured for the the first year with a grant from the Cathedral Music Trust and this will be further supplemented by the Friends of the Music.

Patrick shared the Stratford Churches Together group's initiative to help people in financial difficulty through an advice service called Grace Advocacy. The PCC supported the initiative and there will be further information on how we can get involved to provide this much needed service in these difficult financial times.

Progress has been made on arrangements for an open meeting in the autumn concerning the Church of England's approach to same-sex relationships. David Runcorn has agreed to speak and details will be confirmed in August.

There is much happening at the PCC and more news will follow on a number of these exciting and important initiatives. The next PCC is to be held on 15th September when such items as the Christmas Charities will be agreed.

John Riley

CONFERENCE & BLESSING OF ICONS

The Parishes of St Gregory & Holy Trinity in Stratford-upon-Avon have commissioned icons for their churches and are marking the completion of these icons with this day of celebration

Thursday 3 September 2026

13.00 - 16.30

Stratford Town Hall

- 13.00 **Dr Rowan Williams**, former Archbishop of Canterbury
Love, Prayer and Management: the spiritual world of Gregory the Great
- 14.00 **Abbot Jeremias Schröder**, Abbot Primate of the Benedictine Order
Benedictine Mission: a contradiction in terms?

followed by discussion, an opportunity to meet the iconographers and refreshments

Guild Chapel

- 16.00 Ecumenical Service & Blessing of the Icons
After the service the icons will be taken to their respective churches

The Icons and the Iconographers

St Gregory's
St Benedict & St Gregory
Fr Alex Echeandia OSB

Holy Trinity
Christ Pantocrator
Rev. Susan Mobberley

All welcome, no charge but please register with St Gregory's Church Office
01789 292439 or stgregorytg.sua@rcaob.org.uk

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON



Can you help us CREATE A SEA OF REMEMBRANCE POPPIES?

Last year our wonderful community helped us begin covering the tree trunks along the path to **Holy Trinity Church** with beautiful handmade poppies for Remembrance.

THIS YEAR WE'D LOVE TO MAKE THE DISPLAY EVEN BIGGER – AND WE NEED YOUR HELP!



If you can **knit or crochet poppies**, whether you make one or twenty, every poppy will help create a meaningful tribute to those who gave so much.



Please consider **joining in** and encouraging your friends, family, knitting groups or crochet clubs to take part too.



If you'd like to help or would like more information, please contact Marie at:
mariemcdougall73@gmail.com

Let's remember together
THIS NOVEMBER
LEST WE FORGET

♥ EVERY POPPY MAKES A DIFFERENCE ♥

#Remembrance #Poppies #Knitting #Crochet #Community #LestWeForget
#HolyTrinityChurch #StratfordUponAvon

*Together we
can make a
beautiful tribute
Thank you!*

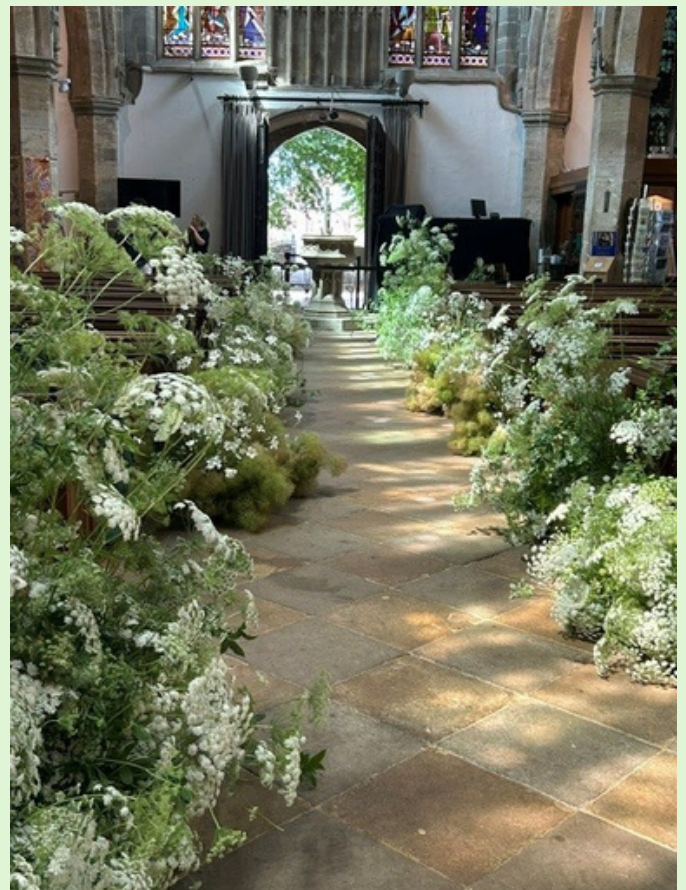
THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
SUPPORT!

SHAKESPEARE SAYS...



**"That time of year thou may'st in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the
cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds
sang."**

*William Shakespeare,
Sonnet 73*



There were many weddings at Holy Trinity Church during the summer and these beautiful arrangements were created for a bridal party who wanted to invoke the atmosphere of a summer meadow in church

TRANSFORMING HEARTS AND MINDSETS IN THE CLASSROOM



When the latest cohort of women walked through the doors of the Evangeline Life Skills Programme, most of them had a single, clear goal in mind: they were there to learn to sew. They looked forward to learning how to operate the machines and walking away with a tool that could change their future and earn an income from.

However, in the Evangeline Life Skills course the women learn computers alongside sewing skills. For many of the participants who had never sat in front of a computer before, this was nerve-wracking.

At the recent graduation, Mandisa, the programme's IT instructor said: "I am the lady that is training people in the computers that they don't want to get trained in. I remember all the faces the first time I explained to them what they will be learning. I remember people saying, 'But I didn't come here for computers. I came for sewing. The only thing I want is sewing.'"

For women who have spent years navigating systemic disadvantages, unlearning "I can't" can be a psychological barrier. Mandisa noticed that when some students first sat at the desks, they would visibly stiffen.

"They remember all the negative things that were told to them in the past. People would say to them 'Why are you going to school at this age? What are you learning computers for? What are you going to do?' There is too much self-doubt in their brains."

Realizing this, Mandisa quickly understood that to be a good instructor in a life skills programme, she had to step into the shoes of each student, acting as a mother, a counsellor and a motivator.

***"We get to train not just computers, not just sewing, not just English—
but the heart and the mind"***

There are mornings when Mandisa stands in front of her class, looks at the troubled or nervous faces of the women in front of her and makes a choice. "I look at them and say, 'Oh, it's not the time for the computer lesson yet.' The lesson is not able to move forward if they are trapped in the weight of their current situation.

Mandisa's understanding comes from her own journey. She arrived in the programme as an instructor with only a basic computer certificate, and learnt how to teach others with the little knowledge she had. Over the years she has grown and discovered her own voice and skills while helping others find theirs.



The results of this approach, combining vocational skills with emotional support, were on full display at the recent graduation ceremony.

The same women who initially protested entering the computer room stood proudly alongside the beautifully crafted outfits they had sewn. Each woman left with far more than a certificate and a sewing machine. They also left as digitally literate women.

As these graduates step out into the world, Mandisa left them with a final message of encouragement: "Forward. That is the only word. Do not turn back. Go forward, keep on pushing, and tune out the noise that distracts you from what you can achieve. We as women have the capacity to look at one problem and find seven different solutions. Go out there and know that you have the capacity to do more."



Finally, we want to extend our deepest gratitude to Holy Trinity Church. You have been a caring and supportive partner, and this programme simply would not be possible without your belief in our mission.

You are supporting the restoration of hope, confidence, and dignity for these incredible women. Thank you for walking alongside us so faithfully as we help our graduates step into a brighter, more independent future.

MASICORP

Masicorp works with the community of Masiphumelele, in Cape Town, South Africa, to provide quality education and skills development opportunities, helping residents towards a sustainable future. The support offered ranges from early childhood development to primary school literacy and numeracy. Masicorp also provides digital and sewing skills development programmes for children, teens, and adults.

JOINT SERVICE WITH STRATFORD METHODISTS



It was a joy to welcome our friends from Stratford Methodist Church to a 10.00am Parish Eucharist in July for a joint service. The sermon was given by Methodist local preacher Sheila Brown, *pictured left*, and Alan Cumming from the church read the lesson, *below*. *Photos, George Reah*



SIXTY YEARS OF OUR PARISH CENTRE

**Lives changed at
the Parish Centre
1966- 2026
Diamond Jubilee**

**HOLY TRINITY
CHURCH**
STRATFORD-UPON-AVON



**Share your stories, photographs and
even videos, to be published as a tribute.**

This year, we are celebrating 60 years of our Parish Centre. Over the past six decades, the Parish Centre has been at the heart of our community, bringing people together, creating lasting memories, and changing lives in countless ways.

To mark this special Diamond Jubilee, we are compiling a collection of anecdotes, stories, photographs, and even videos to celebrate the Centre's remarkable history and the people who have made it so special.

Do you have a favourite memory, a funny story, a treasured photograph, or a video from an event at the Parish Centre? We'd love to hear from you! Please send your contributions to office@stratford-upon-avon.org

REMEMBERING JILL McDOWALL AND THE SHAKESPEARE DRESSES

If you are a regular member of the audience for Trinity Players annual celebration of Shakespeare's birthday, *Coffee, Cake & Shakespeare*, you will have seen the Shakespeare dresses many times. Thanks to back lacing and a loose self fabric panel they can be adjusted to fit all shapes and sizes.

The following day you will see them again in the Birthday Parade this time worn by members of Stratfords of the World. Their greatest moment was flying to Stratford, Connecticut, in the USA to costume scenes from *Much Ado About Nothing*.



What you are less likely to know or remember is that these dresses were made by Jill McDowall and her wardrobe team which included Cilla Burgess and Pam Cheshire along with our set dresser, Hilary Newman, responsible for cushions, covers and hangings.

The project began with five of us making a trip to that mecca of fabric and sewing notions, Birmingham Rag Market. Fortified by coffee at St Martins in the Bull Ring we trundled our shopping trolleys, laden with many yards of gorgeous fabric and braid back to Stratford for the serious work to begin.

After several weeks during which the huge task of cutting out the patterns took over a whole room and kept four sewing machines whirring for hours at a time, Jill and her team arrived at the final rehearsals to scrutinise the fit and fall of the dresses and make any necessary adjustments.

But that was not the end! The team was there at every performance, helping the actors in and out of corsets and lacing them tightly into their dresses, with safety pins and sewing needles at the ready to deal with any emergency.

In addition to making many other stage costumes for Trinity Players, Jill's sewing skills can also be appreciated in the cushions for the choir stalls.

While churches have boards recording the name of vicars from earliest times and plaques and tombs commemorating the gentry or the great and famous, I would like to celebrate the, usually anonymous, Makers, the craftspeople who worked in stone, wood metal, glass, paint or in Jill's case, needle and thread to build and beautify the buildings we cherish.

Ursula Russell

A funeral service celebrating Jill's life was held at Holy Trinity on August 3rd. You can watch the service, led by Revd Jenny Rowland, on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEKBxc8ZYF4>

WHAT IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?



Speaking in the justice and home affairs debate in the Lords in May the Bishop of Gloucester, Rt Revd Rachel Treweek, said, “For far too long we have let the public narrative and media headlines shape our penal policy. We are not being courageous in acting on the evidence regarding what enables change and transformation.” She went on to say that our long term vision must be about investing in restorative rehabilitation, braver community alternatives, valued probation and victim support. This article is an attempt to unpack what is meant by restorative justice as an alternative model to our current system of administering justice.

While restorative justice is a long way from becoming a mainstream approach to justice, in the last 10 years it has captured the imagination of many of those with an interest in reforming the criminal justice system. Building on a range of earlier social movements, social practices and theoretical perspectives, restorative justice has come to attract considerable reforming enthusiasm, both within and outside the criminal justice system. It is helpful to think of restorative justice in terms of both a process and a set of values. Thought of as a process, restorative justice brings together all the parties affected by an incident of wrongdoing, to decide collectively on a consensual basis how to deal with the aftermath of the incident. In a restorative process victims, offenders and their supporters assume responsibility for dealing with the aftermath of an offence, using a deliberative process convened by a third party.

In attempting to find a definition of justice it's helpful to say first of all what justice isn't – justice isn't simply punishment or retribution.



So what is restorative justice? The definition of restorative justice, increasingly used internationally, emphasises both the process and the outcome: “Restorative justice is a process whereby parties with a stake in a specific offence resolve collectively how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future.”

The current system of criminal justice primarily sees the breaking of the law as an issue only between the offender and the state, ignoring the relationships

involved in any offence – the victim, the victim's family, the offender's family, and the community.

As we know the focus of retributive justice on the other hand is on the offender. Laws and punishment are the core values. Outcomes are measured in terms of: What law was broken, Who broke it, and How should he or she be punished? Important to this process are the ideas of separation, that is, putting people in prison or other placements outside the family and community, and labelling or stigmatisation, that is giving people identifications like a parolee or probationer. Restorative justice asks us to do something to mend that which is broken, to heal the hurt, and to remove the causes of harm; It asks us to use healing as an alternative to retribution and punishment.

Restorative justice is an open invitation for alternative approaches. It brings victims, offenders and the communities together to find a solution acceptable to all. It is not an “us versus them” or “duelling lawyers” approach.

Restorative justice, practised at its best today, offers a path away from vengeance and toward healing. The traditional adversarial legal system separates the victim and offender effectively disempowering them. It can create mean and vindictive individuals. Restorative justice provides opportunities for those affected by crime to be directly involved in responding to the harm it causes. It offers support and assistance to victims and holds offenders directly accountable to the people they have violated. The process is entirely voluntary and anyone can back out at any time.

Forgiveness is never the stated goal of the process. Yet restorative justice does offer a safe place in which forgiveness can be explored by any victim wanting to take that path.

In summation, restorative justice does attempt and usually succeeds, in putting a face and name to a victim and offender. Restorative justice is not “bleeding heartism” or another “hug-a-thug” approach but calls those who offend to total accountability, full admission of who was damaged by their actions and commitment to make necessary changes to regain their rightful place in community. Restorative justice can be a beacon which guides everyone who seeks to bring some healing from evil in the world.

Currently attempts are being made for amendments to be made to the Victims and Courts Bill to give victims of crime the right of referral to the restorative justice services. Increasingly when we talk about justice for victims, the debate collapses into retributive justice, as if all victims want is to lock the door and throw away the key, whereas what they really want is not retribution but closure and given the opportunity to enter into a process that allows them to share their feelings concerning the crime with others, often culminating in a meeting with the perpetrator.

In 2014 while working as a Law Lecturer Paul Kohler, a Liberal Democrat MP, survived a murderous attack by four burglars in his home. Meeting one of his attackers in prison, in an encounter organised by the restorative justice charity Why Me? had transformed his family. It allowed his daughter to “demythologise” the perpetrator: no longer a monster, but a deeply flawed human being who she could look straight in the eye and cast from her nightmares.

Only one in 20 adult victims with a known offender are routinely told about restorative justice. Such amendments to the Victims and Courts Bill would establish a right of referral and also commit the Government to undertaking an assessment of the use of restorative justice services by victims.



“As a family, our lives were transformed by a restorative justice session organised by the charity Why Me, where we met one of our four attackers in prison.” (Paul Kohler MP). Photo, Victoria Jones

The Prison Service has also held a consultation on its Restorative Practice hub to support and coordinate restorative justice across the agency. Restorative Justice is one of the most powerful tools we have, not just to reduce reoffending, but to put victims at the heart of the criminal justice system and give them a real sense of closure.

Restorative Justice provides one alternative model. To achieve it would require an enormous, radical, and fundamental shift. It reflects biblical justice, and is worth consideration.

Revd Dr Roy Lodge MBE Ret'd

FAREWELL TO EMMA



Dear all,

Just a short note to say a heartfelt thank you for the beautiful and very generous leaving gifts. I was so touched by everyone's kind words and your financial generosity has been extremely helpful as I get set up here in London. The new house is (almost) unpacked and I am getting to know my new neighbours and colleagues.

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you at my installation service in September but, in the meantime, I thought you might like to see a photo from my licensing by the Acting Bishop of Two Cities (right).

With much love, Emma



Photos from Emma's last service by George Reah





PARISH PICNIC



With the summer weather still very much with us it meant we had the ideal conditions for our parish picnic in the Vicarage garden. Everyone brought their own food and Revd Patrick and Laura warmly welcomed us all and provided drinks.

This picnic lunch followed Revd Emma presiding over her wonderful final service at the 10.00am Parish Eucharist. It was a relaxing opportunity to both catch up with friends as well as meeting those, in some instances, for the first time. Chris Cottrell's ice breaker of finding out more about each other worked a treat too and comments such as 'I didn't know THAT about you!' made for much laughter too.



An occasion such as this really illustrates the benefit of a wider family connection within our church fellowship. Thank you to all those behind the scenes who had worked to ensure that the event went off so smoothly.

Ali and Tim Berkley

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Children and Families Minister, Phil Harper, reflects on a busy summer - Communion before Confirmation, links with the school, toddlers, Breakout, Bubble Church, and holiday activities.



It has been a very busy summer beginning with Lizzie and Matilda being admitted to Communion before Confirmation (see photo on back cover). All through the preparation sessions they were a pleasure to accompany on this important step on their Christian journey. Thank you to everyone who supported them at the service. I ask you to continue to hold them in your prayers for the next part of their journey.



I'd also like to offer huge thanks to all those from the church who helped at Holy Trinity School Summer Fair. Overall £5,647 was raised for the work of the school, which is an incredible amount. As those who read the Herald will have seen I helped to raise some of that money myself by being one of the "willing" victims in the vote for who to gunge at the end of the day. Throughout the afternoon people paid to vote between three of the teachers and me and amazingly we all got the same number of votes! It was a messy end to the day, and not the easiest to wash off, but worth it to raise money for our church school and to see the children's happy faces. One person's comment was that during my gunging Patrick looked happier than he does on Easter Sunday - quite an achievement.

At the end of term, it was a special moment to hand out Children's Bibles to all the Year 6 children who were leaving Holy Trinity School to begin Secondary School. We had a Leavers Eucharist at the school, with all the upper juniors present.

Each of the year 6 were offered a blessing from Patrick, before I gave them one of the Bibles. They loved their books; I'd like to thank all those who contribute to the Bible Gift fund who enable us to give the children such a precious gift.

End of term was also marked at our Toddler Groups. At Trinity Tots we celebrated with an afternoon tea, with one of Barbara's legendary jellies. As well as celebrating some of the toddlers who are leaving us to begin at school, we also said a huge thank you to Penny who has been helping at Trinity Tots for many years, but looking after her own grandchildren on a Thursday has taken precedence over us. We are still in need of helpers at both the Tuesday group at the Ken Kennett Centre, and Trinity Tots on a Thursday. You don't need to be an expert with children, just be willing to make a drink and have a chat with the parents and carers and if you can help get the toys out that's a bonus.



The beginning of the school holidays was once again marked by the Clopton Community Fun Day, on the field opposite the Ken Kennett Centre. Over the years we've had a variety of weather for this event, ranging from cancelling because of the rain, to last year a break in the rain for the event before it started raining again. But finally, this year was nothing but brilliant sunshine. It is wonderful to see this event grow every year, and this was by far the best one yet, with free rides, climbing wall, ponies and the highlight of the day, the dog show; including one of Jane Armitage's dogs winning first prize. Matt did a sterling job singing throughout the afternoon. I was working with The Stratford Family Club to provide some shade for families, as well as toys and the chance to make a paper plate crown. We were so busy I forgot to get any photos of our stall and the amazing crowns made, but it was also a great opportunity to let families know what is happening for children at our churches.

We had a special treat at the last Breakout group. We played a game of pass the parcel, but as well as the sweet treats on each layer there was a piece of good news that Jesus brings. The children chose one of the pieces of good news to write onto a postcard and share with someone else (*pictured right*).

The next breakout group for primary age children will be in the 10am Parish Eucharist on 27th September. We have also begun a Breakout Group for teenagers: the next one of those is on 13th September.



Bubble Church has continued over the summer holidays and I know this has been appreciated by the families. It also helps them to see that this isn't a club, but a church service, and our need for spiritual nourishment doesn't take a break for summer. We've been focussing on different people who were friends with Jesus, including Matthew the tax collector and a rich young man. As well as the story told by the puppets we had an activity to go with the story: we had chocolate gold coins with a heart and the name of someone to share it with (*pictured left*). On another Sunday there was a game of limbo, which got quite competitive towards the end. Our services continue on 6th and 20th September with breakfast from 8.40am and the service at 9.00am.

Looking to the return to school, we will once again be having a blessing of the bags service as part of the Parish Eucharist on 6th September. Everyone is invited to bring a bag that they use for their daily work to be blessed; it might be a school bag, a shopping bag, a tool bag. It's a chance for us to recommit ourselves and be blessed for all the work that we do.

Phil Harper



Dear Members,

I do hope that you have all enjoyed this exceptional summer weather and that you have made the most of being outside and enjoying your gardens and outside spaces.

I announced at the last AGM in November that I would be stepping down from being the chair of Trinity Fellowship and I am pleased to announce that Barbara Bartos will be taking over from me as from our next AGM. As you all know Barbara has been our Speakers Secretary for the past two years and found us some very interesting speakers and has now put together another selection of interesting talks for next year. It has been my privilege to lead the group for the past 20+ years and I pray that it will continue for many more years and go from strength to strength.

The new programme will start on Wednesday 16th September when we hope to welcome Margaret Daws, who is going to tell us the history of our street names in Stratford.

At our meeting in September you will be given our new programme for 2026/27 and we will be collecting our subscriptions for the year at this meeting.

Our meetings are held in the Parish Centre and start at 2.00pm and are for the male members of Holy Trinity as well as the female. If you have not yet joined us please just come along on the 3rd Wednesday in the month and we will be delighted to see you.

I look forward to meeting up with you all again in September.

Gina Lodge, Chair



DOUBLE DIAMOND



Members of Holy Trinity Church were delighted to hear about the diamond wedding anniversaries of two well-known couples within our congregation. Revd Dr Roy Lodge and his wife Gina celebrated sixty years of marriage in July, as did Nigel and Catherine Penn. All four members have given generously of their time and have been actively involved in the work and social activities of the church for many years. We thank them for all their hard work and wish both couples congratulations on their diamond wedding anniversaries.



Nigel and Cathie



Roy and Gina



After the hottest summer on record, it's back to work (or school or whatever) for us all. And that is true of our Parochial Church Council, which meets on 15th September, following July's Awayday which began thinking about our large and diverse programme of activities and priorities for the coming year.

It is too soon to go into detail about all that, but I would ask for readers' prayers in the decisions we have to make about the use of our resources. We are somewhat better off than many parishes in terms of both people and money, and are certainly not an example of the "failing Church" of which we sometimes hear in the media. But the resources given to us are not unlimited and must be used responsibly.



What we do, in terms of outreach and engagement in the community, matters not only in its own right but in the messages we give out about our values.

The growth of our congregation suggests that many people recognise and share those values. If we are to be true to our mission, that sharing is vital, supporting people in their pilgrimage of faith.

One example, which will be on the agenda, is the choice of charities to support through our Christmas collections. We support three charities each year – local, national and international. Normally we change these regularly. But the "international" charity is decided, for a while at least, by Patrick's links with the Masicorp community in South Africa, of which more details will be found elsewhere in this issue.

In recent years we have supported, at national level, the Alzheimers Society which has particular significance for many, as illustrated by the recent death of Jill McDowall which again features elsewhere in this issue; and at local level the Cleft Lip and Palate Association which has a special significance for one of our families. Any further nominations, perhaps especially of innovative local initiatives, would be most welcome from our readers before 15th September!

One value which we hold especially dear is that of inclusivity – across races, genders, sexualities, disabilities and so on. Many readers will know that the Church at large is at something of a crossroads on this. Please pray for the half-dozen PCC members who also serve on Deanery Synod and thus get a vote in the forthcoming General Synod elections at national level. They could indirectly influence the Church far beyond our parish boundaries, to reflect that very value better and so strengthen our mission to our whole nation.

Anthony

“NOT HIDDEN FROM GOD”

Evensong to Commemorate the life of Anne Shakespeare, 9th August 2026

Our service began with a bouquet of herbs and flowers from Anne Hathaway’s Cottage and New Place being placed on Anne’s grave, her epitaph being read (in English), and a collect for her being prayed.

Our preacher this year was Dr Elizabeth Hardy, a Shakespeare expert and woman of faith. Anne, said Hardy, was ‘hidden to the world, perhaps – unhistoric – but not hidden from God’.

She mentioned St Paul’s teaching that ‘every hidden act of love, every secret prayer is actively celebrated by God, and, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, made visible in positively shaping the lives of those around us. We do not always see the outcome of our actions, but their ripples may be felt far beyond our small circles, and even beyond our own time.’



Dr Elizabeth Hardy and Revd Dr Paul Edmondson
Photo, George Reah



Photo, George Reah

Hardy referred to the beloved’s return in The Song of Songs, chapter two, and related this to the reunion of King Leontes and Queen Hermione in Shakespeare’s The Winter’s Tale. Anne was always there for William Shakespeare, whatever their life experience.

John Liggins and Paul Trepte provided a special choir. There were two hundred people in the congregation and money was raised for The Friends of Shakespeare’s Church. All of this took place on the anniversary of Anne’s burial in 1623.

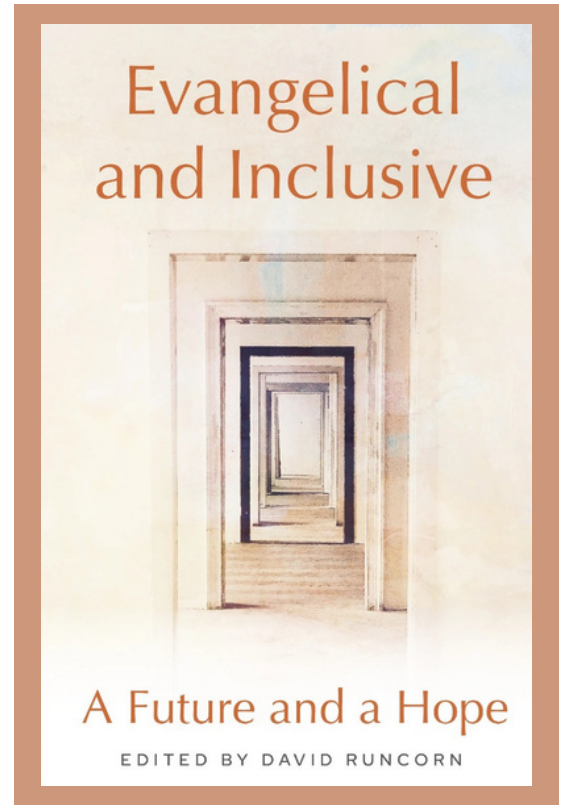
Revd Dr Paul Edmondson
The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

BOOK REVIEW

'Evangelical and Inclusive': A Book Review by Chris Ure

A new book, edited by David Runcorn, a member of Holy Trinity Church, provides an important Christian insight relating to diversity, sexuality and difference. The sign outside Holy Trinity Church describes us as an 'inclusive' church, but what does that mean in practice? This new book not only provides testimonies from those with personal experience of the subject, but it also includes a historical perspective to explain current thinking and the tensions that still exist.

In his introduction, David explains that the book is not a manifesto or a doctrinal study, but a "story in the making, conversations of mutual respect." With a diverse range of contributions from distinguished clergy, theological teachers and researchers, this book explores the history of tensions between conservative and progressive evangelicals, making the point that modern evangelicalism is a broad and diverse movement.



Commenting on the church in Africa, Phil Groves, an expert on global church affairs, speaks of global currents and powerful forces rooted in the USA, which are purveyors of hate, not hope, promoting conversion therapies and anti-gay legislation. In another chapter, a gay priest in the UK who was elected to the Synod was told that he was 'in danger of hell' and some colleagues refused to pray with him or share communion. He describes himself as an "exile of evangelicalism."

Another interesting chapter traces the early history of modern evangelicalism. In the 1980's the evangelical leader John Stott and the missionary theologian Bishop Lesslie Newbigin were exploring 'cross-culture mission' and emphasising the importance of engaging with the modern world. They both spoke of 'double listening' – hearing God, but also hearing the changing world.

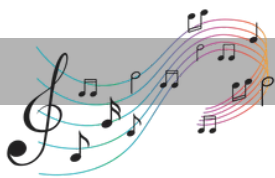
There are some deeply inspiring stories from those who have experienced criticism, judgement and rejection because of their sexuality, one of whom said that she felt like an "untouchable, unfit to serve in God's church."

This is a book that tackles the subject with honesty, openness and integrity including important sections on high profile cases of spiritual abuse, women's voices in a male headship theology, the gospel of the cross and God's unconditional grace for all through salvation.

It can at times be a challenging read, not least the personal testimonies which speak of feelings of depression and suicide for those being judged and excluded. This book is an essential companion for all Christians who believe that the issues of inclusion are central to our modern evangelistic outlook.

Evangelical and Inclusive is edited by David Runcorn, Canterbury Press, ISBN: 9781786227027

The book is available from Amazon and elsewhere, and also from David Runcorn: davidruncorn@mac.com



MUSIC MATTERS



The choir performed Faure's Requiem at a concert in Holy Trinity in June, raising funds to support their summer tour to St David's. Special thanks to Colin Druce for his wonderful organ playing and to soloists Joshua, Matt and Bethany, for their beautiful and sensitive performances. We are grateful to The Friends of the Music at Holy Trinity for their support on the evening, and as always to Marie for her sweet treats.

Photos, George Reah



*Left, Bethany Fletcher sings Pie Jesu;
above, Charlotte Mulryne and
Rebecca Mills*



*Left, young
chorists
rehearsing
for the
concert with
Colin
Millington;*

*Right, Matthew
Packwood,
Offertoire*





The 'Come and Sing' choir, trained and conducted by Director of Music Colin Millington, at Choral Evensong on July 26th



COME AND SING
EVENSONG
 +
Sunday 26 July
 Holy Trinity Church
 Stratford-upon-Avon

2.00 pm
 Rehearsal (including tea and cake)

5.00 – 6.00 pm
 Evensong

PROGRAMME
 Stainer – I Saw the Lord
 Balfour Gardiner – Evening Hymn
 Harwood – Service in A flat
 Radcliffe – Responses



Soundbites

The weekly Soundbites audiences have continued to enjoy some wonderful lunchtime performances over the summer, including a recital by our very own choristers prior to their trip to St David's.

Full details of the scheduled programme are available on our Facebook page, The Friends of Music at Holy Trinity, our website www.htcfom.co.uk and via email to all members. The programme for the upcoming concerts:

- 2nd September Arthur Bocaneanu and Iuliana Alecu (piano duet)
- 9th September Aoife Jennions (clarinet), Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
- 16th September Flute Quartet
- 23rd September David Borsada (voice) and Linda Carr (piano)
- 30th September Clive Letchford and Cabinet of Curiosities

Thank you and farewell to our Organ Scholar

We would like to say a fond farewell to our outgoing Organ Scholar, Nicolas McNab, who will be heading to Durham University this Autumn. Nicolas has been a great asset to the church, not just through his playing for services, but also through teaching theory to the choristers, playing for the choir's Purcell concert and performing during the Lent Organ Recitals. At his final service on 12th July, Nicolas was awarded the Genge bequest in acknowledgement of his loyal service to the choir. We wish him the best of luck for the future.



Concert: Cabinet of Curiosities

On Saturday 25th July an enthusiastic audience was entertained by the local Baroque group Cabinet of Curiosities. The programme, Northern Power House, comprised Baroque music beyond London. It was a wonderful evening and we are extremely grateful to the musicians who gave their time freely in support of the choir's tour to St David's.

The £800 raised will help some young members of the church to develop as musicians, through participating in the tour to St David's. Thank you!

Annual General Meeting

The Friends of the Music AGM was held on 28th June and provided an opportunity to update members on the activities promoted and funded by the Friends, between January 2025 and June 2026. These included: the purchase of a new digital piano for the Parish Centre; the commissioning of the Shakespeare Anthem in both 2025 (Jack Oades) and 2026 (Colin Millington); the introduction of a composition competition for the Shakespeare Introit (won by Justin Parkin); the Shakespeare Organ Recital, given by Martin Baker (in 2025) and Rachel Mahon (in 2026) and 64 Soundbites concerts given between January 2025 and May 2026.

The meeting concluded with the annual awards to Choristers for attendance, leadership, musical improvement, enthusiasm, attitude and musical performance. The very deserving recipients were:

Junior attendance: Alice Garratt

Senior Attendance: Bethany Fletcher

James Walker Cup, Musical Improvement – Junior: Mia Llewellyn Jones

Musical Improvement – Secondary: Paige Hopper

Helen Yates Cup, Enthusiasm and Progress – Junior: Alex Whitehead

Joan Everett Cup, Enthusiasm and Progress – Secondary: Eliza Brann

Hudson-Evans Cup, Demonstrating Leadership – Secondary: Lisa-Ruby Stonehouse

Rohan Stewart-MacDonald Award, Going Above & Beyond Choir Duties: Nicolas McNab

Practical Musicianship Cup, Effort and Attainment Outside of Choir: Kayalavira Karthikeyan

Dodsworth-Wilson Cup, Most Musical Performance: Bethany Fletcher

Standards Cup, Overall Attitude and Attainment: Kayalavira Karthikeyan

Denne Gilkes Memorial Prize, Given for general attitude: Logan McDougall

Trinity Voices, Enthusiasm and progress: Scarlett Deakin

Following the business meeting, members were entertained by vocal, instrumental and dramatic performances from a number of hugely talented choristers.

For a copy of the Minutes and details of Awards please contact us: fomhtc20@gmail.com



Recipients of the Annual Awards to Choristers with Revd Patrick, Director of Music Colin Millington and Assistant Director of Music Rebecca Mills



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Souper Fridays
12.30pm
Holy Trinity
Parish Centre
25th Sept, 30th Oct
& 27th Nov

Homemade soup & pudding **Recommended donation £5**

Everybody welcome
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Saturday 12th Sept
9.45am
Meeting at 
Luddington Village Hall

Short and longer route available **Refreshments after walk**

Opportunity to visit Luddington Church

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For more information please contact Chris on 01789 204273

SOCIAL EVENTS

THE PARISH OF STRATFORD-UPON-AVON
HOLY TRINITY • ALL SAINTS LUDDINGTON • ST. HELEN'S CLIFFORD CHAMBERS

Let's do Coffee Morning
Do your bit for better cancer care

Come along and help us do whatever it takes to support people living with cancer.

Place: HOLY TRINITY CHURCH
Date: SATURDAY 26th SEPTEMBER
Time: 10 AM TO 1 PM
Contact: PAUL LAGEU
07434 328484

 **Scan me to donate**

Simply scan this QR code with your phone to donate direct to your host's Coffee Morning. It's easy, quick and secure. Thank you.

FR Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR
Macmillan Cancer Support, registered charity in England and Wales (203915), Scotland (SC209192) and the Isle of Man (203915). Also operating in Northern Ireland, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal.

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STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

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Men's Breakfast

It's not served-it's shared.
Cook and enjoy a hearty feast and discover faith together.
£5 per person

SATURDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER
IN THE PARISH CENTRE
9AM-11AM

TO BOOK
SCAN THE QR CODE,
OR CALL/MESSAGE JONATHAN ON
07772001369



FROM THE REGISTERS

BAPTISMS



12th July Fion Bennett
26th July Charlie Hutchinson
26th July Hallie Hutchinson
26th July Alfie-Jay Hemmings
2nd August Maive Harwood

9th August Holly Pieri
9th August Olivia Tipping
9th August Georgia Rochfort
11th August Karolyn Brookes
23rd August Otilie Noble

WEDDINGS

4th July Amy Johnson and Mickey McDonagh
4th July Chloe Dale and Luke Powlett
29th August Leah Smith and Paul du Cr s



FUNERALS and MEMORIAL SERVICES



1st July Sheila Simmonds
13th July Rosine Whitehead
15th July Michelle Jones
21st July Nataliia Atamaniuk
31st July Allan Turner
3rd August Jill McDowall

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

The next meeting of the Support Group will be on **Wednesday 2nd September**. If you think it would be helpful to you to meet with other people who are in a similar position at this difficult time in your life please come and join us.

Just come to the Parish Centre at 2.00pm and we will finish by 3.30pm.

Our following meeting will be **7th October**.

There is no need to make an appointment; we would be delighted to see you. Come and join us in the lounge area of the Parish Centre.

David Harrison



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PARISH CONTACTS

Website: www.stratford-upon-avon.org

The Parish Office, Old Town, Stratford upon Avon, CV37 6BG

Tel. 01789 266316 Email: office@stratford-upon-avon.org

Clergy Team

Vicar: Revd Patrick Taylor, 01789 508155, vicar@stratford-upon-avon.org

Associate Minister: Revd Matt Ford, 01789 266316, matt@stratford-upon-avon.org

Children and Families Minister: Phil Harper, 07791 005696, phil@stratford-upon-avon.org

Safeguarding Team

Safeguarding Officer: Helen Warrillow, 01789 266316, office@stratford-upon-avon.org

Safety and Compliance Officer: Liz Roper-Kemp, 01789 266316, liz@stratford-upon-avon.org

Revd Patrick Taylor, 01789 508155, vicar@stratford-upon-avon.org

Revd Matt Ford, 01789 266316, matt@stratford-upon-avon.org

Diocesan Safeguarding Team: 02476 521345

Parish Nurse

Karen, 07907 550704, nurse@stratford-upon-avon.org

Honorary Assistant Ministers with Permission to Officiate

Revd Penny Harrison: 01789 266316

Revd Ben Pullan: 01789 266316

Revd Jenny Rowland: 01789 415548

Venerable Brian Russell: 01789 266 316

Rt Revd Jackie Searle: 01789 266316

Revd David Runcorn: 01789 266316

Revd Roger Watts: 01789 266316

Readers

Paul Gifford: 01789 509 613

David Harrison: 01789 612634, davidianharrison@hotmail.com

Parish Staff

Visitor and Marketing Manager: Lola Spetsioti, 01789 632811, lola@stratford-upon-avon.org

Safety and Compliance Officer: Liz Roper-Kemp, 01789 266316, liz@stratford-upon-avon.org

Parish Administrator: Michele Nicol Hilton, 01789 266316, office@stratford-upon-avon.org

Director of Music: Colin Millington, 01789 266316

Assistant Director of Music: Rebecca Mills, 01789 266316

Church Wardens

Paul Lageu: 07434 328484;

Mike Warrillow: 01789 298928:

Andrew Boyes-Varley: 07860 813920

Diane Armstrong: 07775 795901

Village Contacts

All Saints' Luddington: Jane Beeley, 01789 269618

St. Helen's Clifford Chambers: Pat Woolvin, 07989 318965

Other Contacts

Head Server: Chris Cornford, 01789 295066

Bell Ringers: Charles Wilson, 01789 295467

Bereavement Support Team: David Harrison, 01789 612634, davidianharrison@hotmail.com

Trinity Fellowship: Gina Lodge, 01789 204850

Electoral Roll Officer: Tim Raistrick, 01789 509885

Friends of Shakespeare's Church: contact Parish Office

Friends of St Helen's Church: Angela Wylam, 01789 268156

Lay Chaplains: Keith Payne, 01789 266316

PCC Secretary: Anthony Woollard, 01789 204923

PCC Treasurer: Malcolm Robinson, 07836 601662

Friends of the Music: Caroline Thomas, 01789 266316

Stewardship Officer: Chris Kennedy, 01789 299785

Home Communion: Revd Matt Ford, 01789 266316, matt@stratford-upon-avon.org

Social Events: Chris Cottrell, 01789 204273

Trinity Players: Ursula Russell, 01789 204923

Trinity Tots: Phil Harper, 07791 005696

Welcome Team: Revd Matt Ford, 01789 266316, matt@stratford-upon-avon.org

Sunday Coffee organisers: Tina Hillyard, 01789 551739; Diane Edwards, 07969 228689

Churchyard Maintenance Volunteer Team: Lindsay MacDonald, 01789 293110

CAPTION COMPETITION



Revd Matt was seen recently holding a large mirror at the church door. He was, in fact, trying to encourage a pigeon to fly out from the rafters, but readers had several ideas about what might have been said.

"I think I misunderstood when you said we were going to reflect on Adore." (Paul Lageu)

"That's the mirror for my sermon on Isaiah 3:23 - now for the undergarments, turbans and veils." (Dave A)

A few suggestions from Susan Ward: "Matt wondered if he, like Alice, could pass through the looking glass, and be back at Holy Trinity church in time to take his next service....."

"So that's where the organist's lost chord is!"

"Mirror, mirror off the wall, where did the chorister lob the tennis ball?" and "Mirror, mirror off the wall, where is the source of that bird call?"

"If this doesn't work I'll have to call on Dastardly and Muttley to stop that pigeon!" (Paul Smith)



*The Holy Trinity congregation before the joint service with the Methodist Church in July.
A framed copy of the picture was presented to Revd Emma as part of her farewell gift.*



*Lizzie Jupe and Matilda Martin-Leonardis were admitted to Communion before Confirmation
at a Eucharist in June.*